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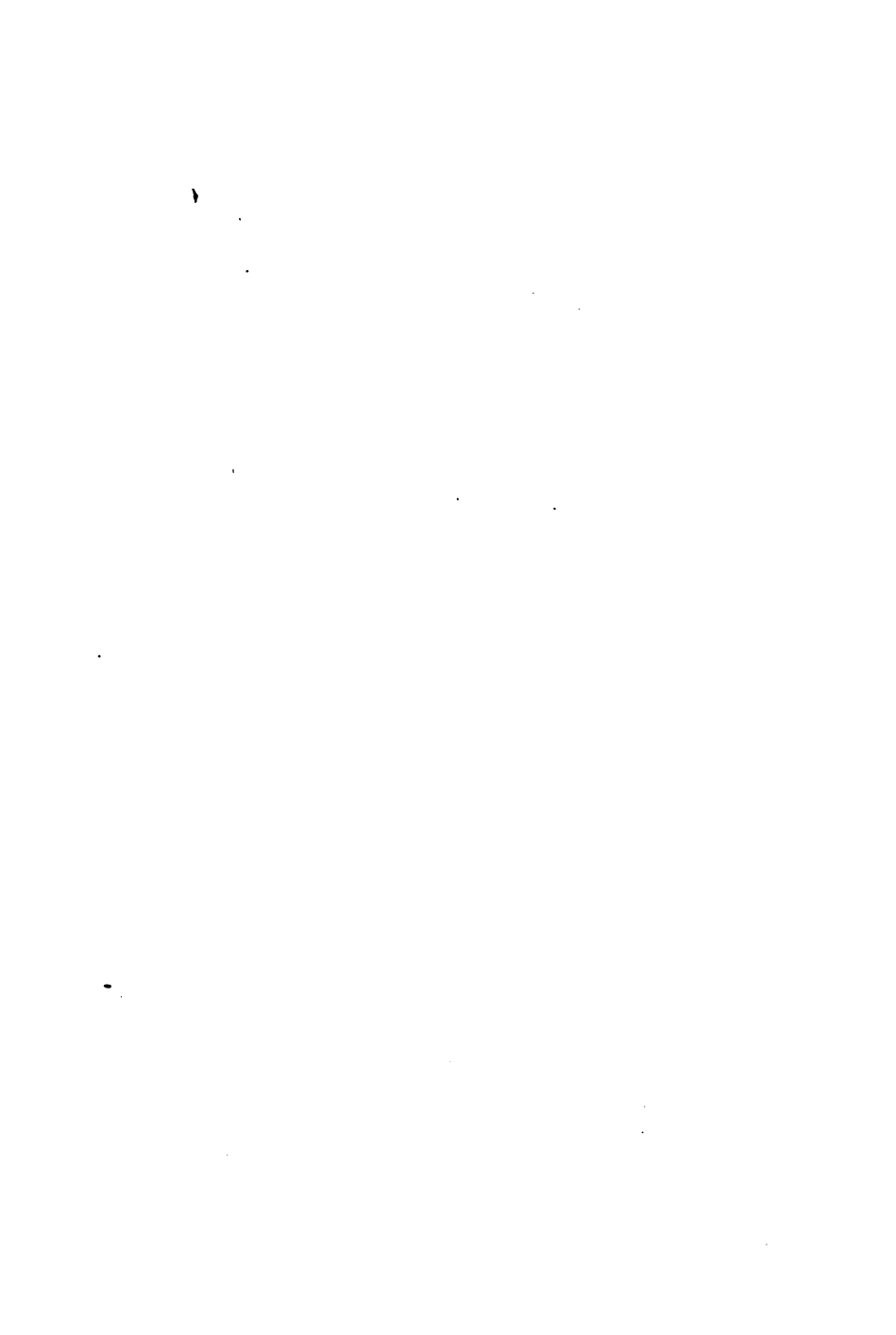
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H E C U B A

AND OTHER PLAYS

BY

EURIPIDES

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE BY

MICHAEL WODHULL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY HENRY MORLEY

LL.D., PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AT
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL
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1888

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INTRODUCTION.

WE left the history of the House of Tantalus with a reference to Helen, as we find her in the translated play which is among those which here complete the collection of the extant works of Euripides.

Menelaus sent ambassadors to Troy to demand back Helen, his wife, whom Paris had carried off. The counsels of Antenor were set aside at Troy, by the persuasions of Paris that gave occasion to the Siege of Troy. Agamemnon, on the throne of the deposed Thyestes, had extended his dominion. Homer gave him command over a hundred ships in the expedition against Troy. Some were from Mycene, which although but six or seven miles from Argos had been capital of a separate kingdom until it was reunited to Argos after the defeat and death of Eurystheus; and when Agamemnon succeeded his father Atreus, he enlarged and beautified Mycene. Twenty-eight unsuccessful suitors of Helen were summoned by Menelaus to contribute aid, and under command of the strongest of the confederates, Agamemnon—who was the brother of Menelaus, and who then had by his wife Clytemnestra three daughters, Iphigenia, Chrysothemis, and Electra, also one son, Orestes, then an infant—the expedition sailed for Troy.

But first, when the confederate fleets met as agreed, in the haven of Aulis they were stayed by a dead calm. Guidance was sought from the Oracle, and the soothsayer Calchas reminded Agamemnon of a vow made in the year of Iphigenia's birth that he would sacrifice to Diana the most beautiful production of the year. That was his daughter, Iphigenia, whom now Diana claimed. The fleet would remain bound in Aulis until the sacrifice of Iphigenia. The story of the sacrifice, of the anger of the maiden's mother Clytemnestra, and her lover Achilles, is told by Euripides in his "*Iphigenia in Aulis*." The Goddess in the act of sacrifice miraculously substituted a hind for the daughter, whom she wafted in a cloud to her temple among the Scythians at Tauris, where she became a Priestess

and where it was the custom of the barbarous people to sacrifice every Greek who landed on their shores.

In the siege of Troy, Paris was slain by the arrows of Philoctetes. Helen then married his brother Deiphobus, whom she betrayed to the Greeks. When she came again into the hands of Menelaus, he was soon reconciled to her. In returning from the ten years' siege of Troy, many of the companions of Agamemnon were lost by wreck on the coast of Eubœa, where the father of Palamedes, to avenge the unjust killing of his son in the camp of the Greeks, had set up false lights. Agamemnon came safely to Argos with the captive prophetess Cassandra, whom he intended for himself. This was a new affront to Clytemnestra; who remembered the murder of her first husband Tantalus and her first infant, who remembered also the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and who had found a paramour in Ægisthus, son of Thyestes. Clytemnestra murdered Agamemnon with an axe as he was coming out of the bath, and then married Ægisthus, who took Agamemnon's throne.

The young Orestes was saved from his stepfather by a faithful servant, who carried him to Phocis, and there put him under the protection of Strophius. Electra remained at Argos and was married to a peasant, lest a husband powerful in the State should help to restore to their birthrights the children of Agamemnon.

When Orestes had passed out of childhood, he went for guidance to the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi, and was directed to avenge the murder of his father. He went then, with his inseparable friend Pylades, in disguise to Argos, and was received in a cottage on the boundary of Argos, by Electra and her peasant husband. He learnt that the peasant, strongly attached to the family of Agamemnon, had cancelled the wrong intended by Ægisthus, and had never claimed rights of a husband. Electra was still a maiden princess. Brother and sister then devised and carried out a plan for the killing of their mother Clytemnestra and Ægisthus.

But when the hands of Orestes were stained with his mother's blood, the Furies rose from Hell, and drove him to distraction. Six days after the murder of Clytemnestra, the citizens of Argos met to pass sentence on Orestes and Electra. Menelaus after a voyage from Troy of seven years' long delays, then landed at Nauplia near Argos, and would have helped his nephew Orestes; but he gave up Orestes and Electra to the people of Argos upon being told by Tyndarus that if he interfered he should never return to Sparta. The Council of Argos gave leave to Orestes and Electra to carry out upon themselves its sentence of death. After consulting with Pylades they resolved to kill Helen and seize their uncle's one daughter, Hermione, as hostage. Helen had vanished; Menelaus breathed revenge; Apollo descended to save Orestes from his uncle, and from the people, by declaring

that Orestes had done what the gods required. But Apollo bade him cleanse away pollution of his mother's blood by a year's banishment, after which he was to submit himself to the judgment of the Areopagus at Athens.

Before the Areopagus one of the Furies was his accuser, Apollo witnessed in his favour. The votes of the Court were equal, and Athené gave the casting vote for his acquittal. But still the Furies were implacable, and Orestes, again appealing to Apollo's Oracle, was ordered to bring the statue of Diana from Tauris to Athens. Orestes sailed upon this mission with Pylades, whom he had affianced to his sister Electra. When the friends landed on the coast of Tauris, the barbarous people seized them and they were carried to Iphigenia to be sacrificed according to the custom of the land. When on the point of being sacrificed, discovery was made, and, with help of Minerva, not only the image of the goddess Diana, but also Iphigenia her priestess, was conveyed to Athens, in whose territories, at Brauronia, Iphigenia remained priestess until her death.

Meanwhile Menelaus had married his only daughter, Hermione, to Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles. Neoptolemus, who had offended Apollo by making the god answerable for the death of Achilles, went to Delphi to appease his wrath. Orestes, who sought Hermione for wife, went also to Delphi and persuaded the people there that Neoptolemus sought plunder of the temple. Neoptolemus was, therefore, murdered by the people of Delphi, as he was going unarmed to the temple to propitiate the god. Then Orestes carried off Hermione, and married her, at the same time when his sister Electra was married to Pylades. The plays of Euripides here leave Orestes ; ruler on the throne of Agamemnon, reconciled to Menelaus, and married to Hermione, through whom, by right of her mother Helen and her father Menelaus, he may hope to bring also under his rule the dominions of Sparta.

Here ends an abstract of an abstract of the History of the House of Tantalus, as given by Michael Wodhull, Esq., to show the relations to each other of the stories upon which Euripides based many of his plays.

This volume completes our set of English versions of all extant plays of Euripides.

H. M.

April 1888

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THE FIRST VOLUME OF

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H. M.

EURIPIDES.

HECUBA.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

POLYDORE'S GHOST.	ULYSSES.
HECUBA.	FEMALE ATTENDANT OF HECUBA.
CHORUS OF CAPTIVE TROJAN	AGAMEMNON.
DAMES.	POLYMESTOR.
POLYXENA.	TALTHYBIUS.

SCENE.—THE THRACIAN CHERSONESUS.

THE GHOST OF POLYDORE.

LEAVING the cavern of the dead, and gates
Of darkness, where from all the gods apart
Dwells Pluto, come I Polydore, the son
Of Hecuba from royal Cisseus sprung,
And Priam, who, when danger threatened Troy,
Fearing his city by the Grecian arms
Would be laid low in dust, from Phrygia's realm
In privacy conveyed me to the house
Of Polymestor, of his Thracian friend,
Who tills the Chersonesus' fruitful soil,
Ruling a nation famed for generous steeds ;
But secretly, with me, abundant gold
My father sent, that his surviving children
Might lack no sustenance, if Ilion's walls
Should by the foe be levelled with the ground.
I was the youngest of all Priam's sons,
By stealth he therefore sent me from the realm ;
Nor could my feeble arm sustain the shield,
Or launch the javelin ; but while yet entire
Each ancient landmark on our frontiers stood,
The turrets of the Phrygian state remained
Unshaken, and my brother Hector's spear

Prospered in battle ; nurtured by the man
 Of Thrace, my father's friend, I, wretched youth,
 Grew like a vigorous scion. But when Troy,
 When Hector failed, when my paternal dome
 Was from its basis rent, and Priam's self,
 My aged father, at the altar bled
 Which to the gods his pious hands had reared,
 Butchered by curst Achilles' ruthless son ;
 Me, his unhappy guest, my father's friend
 Slew for the sake of gold, and having slain,
 Plunged me into the sea, that he might keep
 Those treasures in his house. My breathless corse,
 In various eddies by the rising waves
 Of ocean tost, lies on the craggy shore,
 Unwept, unburied. But by filial love
 For Hecuba now prompted, I ascend
 A disembodied ghost, and thrice have seen
 The morning dawn, to Chersonesus land,
 Since my unhappy mother came from Troy.
 But all the Grecian army, in their ships,
 Here anchoring on this coast of Thrace remain
 Inactive ; for appearing on his tomb
 Achilles, Peleus' son, restrained the troops,
 Who homeward else had steered their barks, and claims
 Polyxena my sister, as a victim
 Most precious at his sepulchre to bleed ;
 And her will he obtain, nor will his friends
 Withhold the gift ; for fate this day decrees
 That she shall die : my mother must behold
 Two of her slaughtered children's corse, mine,
 And this unhappy maid's—that in a tomb
 I may be lodged, where the firm beach resists
 The waves, I to her servant will appear,
 Since from the powers of hell I have obtained
 The privilege of honourable interment,
 And that a mother's hand these rites perform :
 I shall accomplish what my soul desired.
 But on the aged Hecuba's approach,
 Far hence must I retreat ; for from the tent
 Of Agamemnon she comes forth, alarmed
 By my pale spectre. O my wretched mother,
 How art thou torn from princely roofs to view
 This hour of servitude ! what sad reverse
 Of fortune ! some malignant god hath balanced
 Thy present misery 'gainst thy former bliss.

[Exit.

HECUBA, *attended by* TROJAN DAMSELS.

HEC. Forth from these doors, ye gentle virgins, lead me,
 A weak old woman : O ye nymphs of Troy,

Support your fellow-servant, once your queen
 Bear me along, uphold my tottering frame,
 And take me by this aged hand ; your arm
 Shall be my staff to lean on, while I strive
 My tardy pace to quicken. O ye lightnings
 Of Jove, O Night in tenfold darkness wrapt,
 By such terrific phantoms from my couch
 Why am I scared? Thou venerable earth,
 Parent of dreams that flit on raven wing ;
 The vision I abhor, which I in sleep
 This night have seen, relating to my son,
 Who here is fostered in the Thracian realm,
 And to Polyxena my dearest daughter ;
 For I too clearly saw and understood
 The meaning of that dreadful apparition ;
 Ye tutelary gods of this domain,
 Preserve the only anchor of our house,
 My son, who dwells in Thracian fields, o'erspread
 With snow, protected by his father's friend.
 Some fresh event awaits us, and ere long
 By accents most unwelcome shall the ear
 Of wretchedness be wounded : till this hour,
 By such incessant horrors, such alarms,
 My soul was never seized. Where shall I view
 The soul of Helenus, on whom the god
 Bestowed prophetic gifts, ye Phrygian maids ?
 Where my Cassandra to unfold the dream ?
 With bloody fangs I saw a wolf, who slew
 A dappled hind, which forcibly he tore
 From these reluctant arms, and what increased
 My fears, was this—Achilles' spectre stalked
 Upon the summit of his tomb, and claimed
 A gift, some miserable Trojan captive.
 You therefore I implore, ye gods, avert
 Such doom from my loved daughter,

CHORUS, HECUBA.

CHOR. I to thee,
 To thee, O Hecuba, with breathless speed,
 Fly from the tents of our imperious lords,
 Where I by lot have been assigned, and doomed
 To be a slave, driven by the pointed spear
 From Troy ; by their victorious arms the Greeks
 Have made me captive : nothing can I bring,
 Thy sorrows to alleviate ; but to thee
 Laden with heaviest tidings am I come
 The herald of affliction. For 'tis said,
 Greece in full council hath resolved thy daughter
 A victim to Achilles shall be given.

The warrior mounting on his tomb, thou know'st,
Appeared in golden armour, and restrained
The fleet just ready to unfurl its sails,
Exclaiming, " Whither would ye steer your course,
Ye Greeks, and leave no offering on my grave?"
A storm of violent contention rose,
And two opinions in the martial synod
Of Greece went forth; the victim, some maintained,
Ought on the sepulchre to bleed, and some
Such offering disapproved. But Agamemnon,
Who shares the bed of the Prophetic Daine,
Espoused thy interest; while the sons of Theseus,
Branches from the Athenian root, discussed
The question largely in each point of view,
But in the same opinion both concurred,
And said that never should Cassandra's love
To great Achilles' valour be preferred:
Equally balanced the debate still hung,
When he, that crafty orator, endued
With sweetest voice, the favourite of the crowd,
Laertes' son, persuaded all the host,
Not to reject the first of Grecian chiefs,
And yield the preference to a victim slave:
Lest some vindictive ghost, before the throne
Of Proserpine arising, might relate
How Greece, unmindful of her generous sons,
Who nobly perished for their native land,
From Ilion's fields departed. In a moment
Ulysses will come hither, from thy breast,
And aged arms to drag the tender maid.
But to the temples, to the altars, go,
In suppliant posture clasp Atrides' knees,
Invoke the gods of heaven and hell beneath,
For either thou wilt by thy prayers avert
Thy daughter's fate, else must thou at the tomb
Behold the virgin fall distained with gore,
And gushing from her neck a crimson stream.

HEC. Wretch that I am! ah me! what clamorous sounds,
What words, what plaints, what dirges shall I find,
Expressive of the anguish which I feel?
Opprest by miserable old age, bowed down
Under a load of servitude too heavy
To be endured: what sanctuary remains,
What valiant race, what city will protect me?
The hoary Priam is no more, my sons
Are now no more. Or to this path, or that,
Shall I direct my steps? or whither go?
Where shall I find some tutelary god?
Ye Phrygian captives, messengers of ill,

O ye who with unwelcome tidings fraught,
Come hither, ye have ruined me. The orb
Of day shall never rise to fill this breast
With any comfort more. Ye luckless feet,
Bear an infirm old woman to the tent
Of our captivity. Come forth, my daughter,
Come forth and listen to thy mother's voice,
That thou may'st know the rumour I have heard,
In which thy life is interested.

POLYXENA, HECUBA, CHORUS.

POLYX. O mother,
What mean you by those shrieks? what fresh event
Proclaiming, from my chamber, like a bird,
Have you constrained me, urged by fear, to speed
My flight?

HEC. Ah, daughter!

POLYX. With foreboding voice,
Why do you call me? these are evil omens.

HEC. Alas! thy life, Polyxena.

POLYX. Speak out,
Nor aggravate the horrors yet untold
By long suspense. I fear, O mother, much
I fear. What mean those oft repeated groans?

HEC. Thou child of a most miserable mother!

POLYX. Why speak you thus?

HEC. The Greeks, with one consent,
Resolve that on the tomb of Peleus' son
Thou shalt be sacrificed.

POLYX. What boundless woes
Are these which to your daughter you announce!
Yet, O my mother, with the tale proceed.

HEC. Of a most horrible report I speak,
Which says, that, by the suffrage of the Greeks,
It is resolved to take away thy life.

POLYX. O, my unhappy mother, doomed to suffer
Wrongs the most dreadful, doomed to lead a life
Of utter wretchedness: what grievous curse,
Such as no language can express, on you
Hath some malignant demon hurled! no more
Can I, your daughter, share the galling yoke
Of servitude with your forlorn old age;
For like some lion's whelp, or heifer bred
Upon the mountains, hurried from your arms
Shall you behold me, and with severed head
Consigned to Pluto's subterraneous realms
Of darkness, there among the silent dead,
Wretch that I am, shall I be laid. These tears
Of bitter lamentation I for you,

For you, O mother, shed ; but my own life
I heed not, nor the shame, nor fatal stroke,
For I in death a happier lot obtain.

CHOR. To thee, O Hecuba, with hasty step
Behold Ulysses some new message brings.

ULYSSES, HECUBA, POLYXENA, CHORUS,

ULY. Though I presume the counsels of our troops
And their decision are already known
To thee, O woman, yet must I repeat
Th' unwelcome tidings ; at Achilles' tomb,
Polyxena, thy daughter, have the Greeks
Resolved to slay ; me to attend the virgin
Have they commanded : but Achilles' son
Is at the altar destined to preside,
And be the priest. Know'st thou thy duty then ?
Constrain us not to drag her from those arms
With violence, nor strive with me ; but learn
The force of thy inevitable woes :
For there is wisdom, e'en when we are wretched,
In following reason's dictates.

HEC. Now, alas !
It seems a dreadful struggle is at hand,
With groans abounding and unnumbered tears.
I died not at the time I ought to die,
Neither did Jove destroy me ; he still spares
My life, that I may view fresh woes, yet greater,
Wretch that I am, than all my former woes.
But if a slave, who not with bitter taunt,
Or keen reproach, her questions doth propose,
Might speak to freemen, now 'tis time for you
To cease, and give me audience while I ask——

ULY. Allowed, proceed ; for I without reluctance
Will grant thee time.

HEC. Remember you when erst
You came to Troy a spy, in tattered garb
Disguised, and from your eyes upon your beard
Fell tears extorted by the dread of death ?

ULY. I well remember : for by that event
My inmost heart was touched.

HEC. But Helen knew you,
And told me only.

ULY. I can ne'er forget
Into what danger I was fallen.

HEC. My knees
You in a lowly posture did embrace.

ULY. And to thy garment clung with faltering hand.

HEC. At length I saved and from our land dismissed you.

ULY. Hence I the solar beams yet view.

HEC. What language
Did you then hold, when subject to my power?

ULY. Full many were the words which I devised
To save my life.

HEC. Doth not your guilt appear
From your own counsels? Though your tongue avows
The generous treatment you from me received
No benefit on me do you confer,
But strive to harm me. O ungrateful race
Of men, who aim at popular applause
By your smooth speeches; would to Heaven I ne'er
Had known you, for ye heed not how ye wound
Your friends, whene'er ye can say ought to win
The crowd. But what pretence could they devise
For sentencing this virgin to be slain?
Are they constrained by fate, with human victims,
To drench the tomb on which they rather ought
To sacrifice the steer? or doth Achilles
Demand her life with justice, to retaliate
Slaughter on them who slaughtered? But to him
Hath she done nought injurious. He should claim
Helen as victim at his tomb, for she
His ruin caused by leading him to Troy.
If it was needful that some chosen captive
Distinguished by transcendent charms should die,
We were not meant; for the perfidious daughter
Of Tyndarus is most beauteous, and her crimes
To ours at least are equal. Justice only
In this debate supports me: hear how large
The debt which 'tis your duty to repay
On my petition: you confess you touched
My hand, and these my aged cheeks, in dust
Grovvelling a suppliant; yours I now embrace,
From you the kindness which I erst bestowed
Again implore, and sue to you: O tear not
My daughter from these arms, nor slay the maid:
Sufficient is the number of the slain.
In her I yet rejoice, in her forget
My woes; she, for the loss of many children,
Consoles me, I in her a country find,
A nurse, a staff, a guide. The mighty ought not
To issue lawless mandates, nor should they,
On whom propitious fortunes now attend,
Think that their triumphs will for ever last:
For I was happy once, but am no more,
My bliss all vanished in a single day.
Yet, O my friend, revere and pity me,
Go to the Grecian host, admonish them
How horrible an action 'twere to slay

These captive women whom at first ye spared,
 And pitied when ye dragged them from the altars.
 For by your laws 'tis equally forbidden
 To spill the blood of freemen, or of slave.
 Although you weakly argue, will your rank
 Convince them : for the self-same speech, when uttered
 By the ignoble, and men well esteemed,
 Comes not with equal force.

CHOR.

The human soul

Is not so flinty as to hear the woes
 And plaintive strains thou lengthen'st out, nor shed
 The sympathizing tear.

ULY.

To me attend,

O Hecuba, nor through resentment deem
 That from a foe such counsels can proceed :
 I am disposed to save thee, and now hold
 No other language : but will not deny
 What I to all have said ; since Troy is taken,
 On the first warrior of the host who asks
 A victim, should thy daughter be bestowed.
 The cause why many cities are diseased
 Is this : the brave and generous man obtains
 No honourable distinction to exalt him
 Above the coward. But from us, O woman,
 Achilles claims such homage, who for Greece
 Died nobly. Is not this a foul reproach,
 If, while our friends yet live, we seek their aid,
 But after death ungratefully forget
 Past services ? Should armed bands once more
 Assemble, and renew the bloody strife,
 Will not some hardy veteran thus exclaim :
 " Shall we go forth to battle, or indulge
 The love of life, now we have seen the dead
 Obtain no honours ? " While from day to day
 I live, though I have little, yet that little
 For every needful purpose will suffice.
 But may conspicuous trophies o'er my grave
 Be planted, for such tribute to my name
 Will last to after-ages. If thou call
 Thy sufferings piteous, hear what in reply
 We have to urge ; amidst the Grecian camp
 Are many aged dames, as miserable
 As thou art, with full many a hoary sire,
 And weeping bride, torn from her valiant lord,
 O'er whose remains hath Ida's dust been strewn.
 Support thy woes : if with mistaken zeal
 We have resolved to honour the deceased,
 Our crime is ignorance : but ye barbarians
 Pay no distinction to your friends, no homage

To the illustrious dead ; hence Greece prevails ;
But ye from your pernicious counsels reap
The bitter fruits they merit.

CHOR. Ah, what ills
Ever attend the captive state, subdued
By brutal violence, and forced t' endure
Unseemly wrongs.

HEC. Those words I vainly spoke
Thy slaughter to avert, in air were lavished ;
But, O my daughter, if thy power exceed
Thy mother's, like the nightingale send forth
Each warbled note, to save thy life, excite,
By falling at his knees, Ulysses' pity,
And on this ground, because he too hath children,
Entreat him to compassionate thy doom.

POLYX. I see thee, O Ulysses, thy right hand
Beneath thy robe concealing, see thee turn
Thy face away, lest I should touch thy beard.
Be of good cheer ; I'll not call down the wrath
Of Jove who guards the suppliant, but will follow
Thy steps, because necessity ordains
And 'tis my wish to die ; if I were loth,
I should appear to be an abject woman,
And fond of life : but what could lengthened life
Avail to me, whose father erst was lord
Of the whole Phrygian realm ? Thus first I drew
My breath beneath the roofs of regal domes ;
Then was I nurtured with the flattering hope
That I should wed a monarch, and arrive
At the proud mansion of some happy youth.
Ill-fated princess, thus I stood conspicuous
Amid the dames and brightest nymphs of Troy,
In all but immortality a goddess ;
But now am I a slave, and the first cause
Which makes me wish to die, is that abhorred
Unwonted name ; else some inhuman lord
With gold perchance might purchase me, the sister
Of Hector, and full many a valiant chief,
Might make me knead the bread, and sweep the floor,
And ply the loom, and pass my abject days
In bitterness of woe : some servile mate
Might bring dishonour to my bed, though erst
I was deemed worthy of a sceptred king :
Not thus. These eyes shall to the last behold
The light of freedom. O ye shades receive
A princess. Lead me on then, O Ulysses,
And as thou lead'st despatch me, for no hope,
No ground for thinking, I shall e'er be happy,
Can I discern : yet hinder not by word

Or deed the steadfast purpose I have formed ;
 But, O my mother, in this wish concur
 With me, that I may die ere I endure
 Such wrongs as suit not my exalted rank.
 For whosoe'er hath not been used to taste
 Of sorrow, bears indeed the galling yoke,
 Yet is he grieved, when he to such constraint
 Submits his neck : but they who die may find
 A bliss beyond the living ; for to live
 Ignobly were the utmost pitch of shame.

CHOR. A great distinction, and among mankind
 The most conspicuous, is to spring from sires
 Renowned for virtue ; generous souls hence raise
 To heights sublimer an ennobled name.

HEC. Thou, O my daughter, well indeed hast spoken ;
 Yet these exalted sentiments of thine
 To me will cause fresh grief ; but, if the son
 Of Peleus must be gratified, and Greece
 Avoid reproach, Ulysses, slay not her,
 But me, conducting to Achilles' tomb,
 Transpierce with unrelenting hand. I bore
 Paris, whose shafts the son of Thetis slew.

ULY. Not thee for victim, O thou aged dame,
 But her, Achilles' spectre hath demanded.

HEC. Yet slay me with my daughter ; so shall earth,
 And the deceased who claims these hateful rites,
 A twofold portion drink of human gore.

ULY. Enough in her of victims ; let no more
 Be added : would to Heaven we were not bound
 To offer up this one !

HEC. The dread behests
 Of absolute necessity require,
 That with my daughter I should die.

ULY. What mean'st thou ?
 I know no lord to counteract my will.

HEC. Her, as the ivy clings around the oak,
 Will I embrace.

ULY. Not if to wiser counsels
 Thou yield just deference.

HEC. I will ne'er consent
 My daughter to release.

ULY. Nor will I go,
 And leave her here.

POLYX. Attend to me, my mother,
 And, O thou offspring of Laertes, treat
 The just emotions of parental wrath
 With greater mildness. But, O hapless woman,
 Contend not with our conquerors. Would you fall
 Upon the earth and wound your aged limbs,

Thrust from me forcibly, by youthful arms
Torn with disgrace away? Provoke not wrongs
Unseemly; O, my dearest mother, give
That much-loved hand, and let me join my cheek
To yours; for I no longer shall behold
The radiant orb of yonder sun. Now take
A last farewell, O you who gave me birth;
I to the shades descend.

HEC. But I the light
Am doomed to view, and still remain a slave.

POLYX. Unwedded, reft of promised bridal joys.

HEC. Thou, O my daughter, claim'st the pitying tear:
But I am a most miserable woman.

POLYX. There shall I sleep among the realms beneath,
From you secluded.

HEC. What resource, alas!
For me, the wretched Hecuba is left?
Where shall I finish this detested life?

POLYX. Born free, I die a slave.

HEC. I too, bereft
Of all my children.

POLYX. What commands to Hector,
Or to your aged husband, shall I bear?

HEC. Tell them I of all women am most wretched.

POLYX. Ye paps which sweetly nourished me——

HEC. Alas!

My child's untimely miserable fate.

POLYX. Farewell, my mother, and my dear Cassandra.

HEC. To others in that language speak; be theirs
The happiness thy mother cannot taste.

POLYX. And thou, my brother Polydore, who dwel'st
Among the Thracians, famed for generous steeds——

HEC. If yet he live; but this I greatly doubt,
Because I am in all respects so wretched.

POLYX. He lives, and when the hour of death is come,
Will close your eyes.

HEC. I'm prematurely dead
While yet alive, bowed down to earth by woe.

POLYX. Now bear me hence, Ulysses, o'er my face
Casting a veil: for ere I at the altar

Am slain, this heart is melted by the plaints
Of my dear mother, and my tears augment
Her sorrows. O thou radiant light; for still

Am I permitted to invoke thy name,
But can enjoy thee only till I meet
The lifted sword, and reach Achilles' tomb.

[*Exeunt* ULYSSES and POLYXENA.]

HEC. I faint, my limbs are all unnerved; return,
My daughter, let me touch that hand once more,

Leave me not childless. O, my friends, I perish ;
 Ah, would to Heaven I could see Spartan Helen,
 In the same state, that sister to the sons
 Of Jove, for by her beauteous eyes was Troy,
 That prosperous city, with disgrace o'erthrown.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

Ye breezes, who the ships convey,
 That long becalmed at anchor lay,
 Nor dared to quit the strand ;
 As the swift keel divides the wave,
 Say whither am I borne a slave,
 Ordained to tread the Doric land,
 Or Phthia, where beset with reeds,
 Apidanus, the sire of limpid rills,
 Winding a-down the channelled hills,
 Waters the fruitful meads ?

I. 2.

Or to that isle, with dashing oar
 Impelled, shall I my woes deplore,
 And on the sacred earth,
 Where first the palm and laurel rose,
 Memorials of Latona's throes,
 Which to the twins divine gave birth,
 Teach the harmonious strain to flow ;
 With Delos' nymphs Diana's praise resound,
 Her hair with golden fillet bound,
 And never-erring bow ?

II. 1.

Or, pent in some Athenian tower,
 Devoted to Minerva's power,
 On the robe's tissued ground
 While, shadowed by my needle, spread
 Expressive forms, in vivid thread,
 Picture the goddess whirling round
 Her chariot with unrivalled speed ;
 Or represent the Titan's impious crew,
 Whom Jove's red lightnings overthrew,
 Those monsters doomed to bleed ?

II. 2.

Alas ! my sons, a valiant band,
 My fathers, and my native land,

Ye shared the general fate.
Sacked by the Greeks, Troy's bulwarks smoke,
But I, constrained to bear the yoke,
Shall soon behold some foreign state,
To ignominious bondage led ;
And leaving vanquished Asia Europe's slave,
Debarred an honourable grave,
Ascend the victor's bed.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TAL. Where, O ye Phrygian damsels, shall I find
The wretched Hecuba, who erst was queen
Of Ilion ?

CHOR. Prostrate near you on the ground,
Wrapt in her mantle, there she lies.

TAL. Great Jove !
What shall I say ? that thou from Heaven look'st down
Upon mankind, or have they rashly formed
A vain opinion, deeming that the race
Of gods exist, though fortune governs all ?
Ha ! was not this the queen of wealthy Phrygia,
And was not she the happy Priam's wife ?
But her whole city by the hostile spear
Is now destroyed, while she a slave, bowed down
By age, and childless, stretched upon the ground,
Defiles with dust her miserable head.
Old as I am, yet gladly would I die
Rather than sink into abhorred disgrace.
Arise, unhappy woman, O lift up
That feeble body, and that hoary head.

HEC. Away ! O suffer this decrepit frame
To rest. Why move me ! Whosoe'er thou art,
What mean'st thou ? why dost thou molest th' afflicted ?

TAL. Talthybius : me, the herald of the Greeks,
O woman, Agamemnon hath despatched
To fetch you—

HEC. Com'st thou, by the Greeks ordained,
My friend, to slay me also at the tomb ?
How welcome were such tidings ; let us go,
With speed conduct me thither.

TAL. To inter
Your daughter, I invite you ; both the sons
Of Atreus, and the assembled Grecian host,
Have sent me for that purpose.

HEC. Ah ! what say'st thou ?
Thou com'st not to inform me I must die,
But to unfold the most disastrous tidings.
Then art thou lost, my daughter, from the arms
Of thy fond mother torn ; of thee, my child

Am I bereft. But how did ye destroy her,
Respectfully, or with the ruthless hand
Of hostile rage? Speak, though it wound my soul.

TAL. A second time, in pity to your daughter,
You make me weep; for now while I relate
Her sufferings, tears bedew these swimming eyes,
Such as I shed when at the tomb she perished.
To view the sacrifice the Grecian host
Were all assembled: taking by the hand
Polyxena, on the sepulchral hillock
Achilles' son then placed her: I drew near,
Attended by the chosen youths of Greece,
To hold the tender victim, and prevent
Her struggles. But Achilles' son, uplifting
With both his hands a cup of massive gold,
Poured forth libations to his breathless sire;
And gave a sign to me, through the whole camp
Strict silence to proclaim. I in the midst
Stood up and cried: "Be mute, ye Greeks, let none
Presume to speak, observe a general silence."
The troops obeyed, and through their crowded ranks
Not e'en a breath was heard, while in these words
The chief expressed his purpose: "Son of Peleus,
My father, the propitiatory drops
Of these libations which invite the dead
Accept; O come and quaff the crimson blood
Of this pure virgin, whom to thee all Greece
And I devote; be thou benign, O grant us
Securely to weigh anchor, to unbind
Our halsers, and on all of us bestow
A happy voyage to our native land
From vanquished Troy." He ceased, and in his prayer
Joined the whole army, when the chief unsheathed
His golden-hilted sword, and gave a sign
To chosen youths of Greece to hold the virgin,
Which she perceived, and in these words addressed
The warriors: "O ye Argives, who laid waste
My city, willingly I die, let no man
Confine these arms, I with undaunted breast
Will meet the stroke. I by the gods conjure you
Release, and slay me as my rank demands
Like one born free; for I from mighty kings
Descend, and in the shades beneath should blush
To be accounted an ignoble slave."
Through all the host ran murmurs of assent,
And royal Agamemnon bade the youths
Release the virgin; they their monarch's voice,
Soon as they heard, obeyed; our lord's behests
The princess too revering, from her shoulder

Down to her waist rent off the purple robe,
 Displayed her bosom like some statue formed
 In exquisite proportion, and to earth
 Bending her knee, in these affecting words
 Expressed herself: "If at my breast thou aim
 The wound, strike here; if at my neck, that neck
 Is ready bared." Half willing, and half loth,
 Through pity for the maid, he with keen steel
 Severed the arteries; streams of blood gushed forth:
 Yet even thus, though at her latest gasp,
 She showed a strong solicitude to fall
 With decency, while stood the gazing host
 Around her: soon as through the ghastly wound
 Her soul had issued, every Greek was busied
 In various labours; o'er the corse some strewed
 The verdant foliage, others reared a pyre
 With trunks of fir: but he who nothing brought,
 From him who with funereal ornament
 Was laden, heard these taunts: "O slothful wretch,
 Bear'st thou no robe, no garland, hast thou nought
 To give in honour of this generous maid?"
 Such their encomiums on thy breathless daughter.
 You, of all women, who in such a child
 Were happiest, now most wretched I behold.

CHOR. Fate, the behests of the immortal gods
 Accomplishing, with tenfold weight hath caused
 This dreadful curse to fall on Priam's house,
 And on our city.

HEC. 'Midst unnumbered ills
 I know not, O my daughter, whither first
 To turn my eyes, for if on one I touch,
 Another hinders me, and I again,
 By a long train of woes succeeding woes,
 To some fresh object am from thence called off;
 Nor can I from my tortured soul efface
 The grief thy fate occasions; yet the tale
 Of thy exalted courage checks my groans,
 Which else had been immoderate. No just cause
 Have we for wonder, if the barren land
 Cheered by Heaven's influence, with benignant suns
 Yields plenteous harvests, while a richer soil
 Deprived of every necessary aid
 Bears weeds alone. But 'midst the human race
 The wicked man is uniformly wicked,
 The good still virtuous, nor doth evil fortune
 Corrupt his soul; the same unsullied worth
 He still retains. Is this great difference owing
 To birth, or education? We are taught
 What virtue is, by being nurtured well,

And he who thoroughly hath learnt this lesson,
 Guided by the unerring rule of right,
 Can thence discern what's base.—My soul in vain
 Hath hazarded these incoherent thoughts.
 But, O Talthybius, to the Greeks repair,
 And strict injunctions give, that no man touch
 My daughter's corse, but let the gazing crowd
 Be driven away. For in a numerous host
 Its multitudes break loose from all restraints,
 The outrages of mariners exceed
 Devouring flame, and whosoe'er abstains
 From mischief, by his comrades is despised.
 But, O my aged servant, take and dip
 That urn in ocean's waves, and hither bring,
 Filled with its water, that the last sad rites
 To my departed daughter I may pay,
 And lave the corse of that unwedded bride,
 Of that affianced virgin : but alas !
 Whence with such costly gifts as she deserves,
 Her tomb can I adorn ? My present state
 Affords them not, but what it doth afford
 Will I bestow, and from the captive dames
 Appointed to attend me, who reside
 Within these tents, some ornaments collect,
 If, unobserved by their new masters, aught
 They have secreted. O ye splendid domes,
 Ye palaces once happy, which contained
 All that was rich and fair ; O Priam thou
 The sire, and I who was the aged mother
 Of an illustrious race, how are we dwindled
 To nothing, stripped of all our ancient pride !
 Yet do we glory, some in mansions stored
 With gold abundant, others when distinguished
 Among the citizens by sounding titles.
 Vain are the schemes which with incessant care
 We frame, and all our boastful words are vain.
 The happiest man is he who, by no ill
 O'ertaken, passes through life's fleeting day.

[*Exit* HECUBA.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

By Heaven was my devoted head
 Menaced with impending ill,
 What time the pines, whose branches spread
 Their tutelary shade o'er Ida's hill,

Were laid by Phrygian Paris low,
That his adventurous bark might stem the tide,
From Sparta's coast to waft the fairest bride
On whom the solar beams their golden radiance throw.

II.

Surrounding labours were at hand
Leagued with the behests of fate ;
Then did such madness seize the land,
As called down vengeance from a foreign state.
The royal swain with dazzled eyes
Gave that decree, the source of all our woes,
When from three rival goddesses he chose
Bright Venus, and pronounced that she deserved the prize.

III.

The spear and death hence raged around,
Hence were my mansions levelled with the ground ;
Staining with tears Eurotas' tide,
Too deeply grieved to share the victor's pride,
The Spartan virgin too in vain
Bewails her favoured youth untimely slain,
While, sprinkling ashes o'er their vest
And hoary head, the matrons bend
O'er their sons' urns ; their groans to Heaven ascend,
They tear their cheeks, and beat their miserable breast.

ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

ATT. Where is the wretched Hecuba, my friends,
Who in her woes surpasses all, or male,
Or of the female race ? her none can rob
Of her just claim, pre-eminence in grief.

CHOR. With the harsh sounds of that ill-boding tongue,
O wretch, what mean'st thou ? wilt thou never cease
To be th' unwelcome herald of affliction ?

ATT. Most grievous are the tidings which I bring
To Hecuba, nor easy were the task
In words auspicious to make known to mortals
Such dire calamities.

CHOR. From her apartment
She seasonably comes forth to give thee audience.

HECUBA, ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

ATT. O most unfortunate, whose woes exceed
All that the power of language can express,
My queen, you perish, doomed no more to view
The blessed light ; of children, husband, city,
Bereft and ruined.

HEC. Nothing hast thou told

But what I knew, thou only com'st t' insult me :
 Yet wherefore dost thou bring to me this corse
 Of my Polyxena, o'er whom 'twas said
 The Grecian host with pious zeal all vied
 To heap a tomb ?

ATT. She knows not, but laments
 For the deceased Polyxena alone,
 And to her recent woes is yet a stranger.

HEC. Ah, bring'st thou the inspired prophetic head,
 And the dishevelled tresses of Cassandra ?

ATT. You speak of one yet living, but bewail not
 This the deceased : survey the naked corse
 Of him whose death to you will seem most strange
 And most unlooked for.

HEC. Ha, I see my son,
 My dearest Polydore, whom he of Thrace
 Beneath his roof protected. I am ruined ;
 Now utterly I perish. O my son,
 For thee, for thee I wake the frantic dirge,
 By that malignant demon which assumed
 Thy voice, thy semblance, recently apprized
 Of this calamity.

ATT. O wretched mother,
 Know you then what was your son's fate ?

HEC. A sight
 Incredible and new to me is that
 Which I behold : for from my former woes
 Spring woes in long succession, and the day
 When I shall cease to weep, shall cease to groan,
 Will never come.

CHOR. The woes which we endure
 Alas ! are dreadful.

HEC. O my son, thou son
 Of an ill fated mother, by what death
 Didst thou expire ? through what disastrous cause
 Here liest thou prostrate ? ah, what bloody hand——

ATT. I know not : on the shore his corse I found.
 HEC. Cast up by the impetuous waves, or pierced
 With murderous spear ?

ATT. The surges of the deep
 Had thrown it on the sand.

HEC. Alas ! too well
 I comprehend the meaning of the dream
 Which to these eyes appeared : the spectre borne
 On sable pinions no illusion proved,
 When, O my son, thee, thee it represented
 No longer dwelling in the realms of light.

CHOR. Instructed by that vision, canst thou name
 The murderer ?

HEC. 'Twas my friend, the Thracian king,
With whom in secrecy his aged sire
Had placed him.

CHOR. Ha ! what mean'st thou ? to possess
That gold by slaying him ?

HEC. O, 'twas a deed
Unutterable, a deed without a name,
Surpassing all astonishment, unholy,
And not to be endured. Where now the laws
Of hospitality ? Accursed man,
How cruelly hast thou with reeking sword
Transpierced this unresisting boy, nor heard
The gentle voice of pity !

CHOR. Hapless queen,
How hath some demon, thy malignant foe,
Rendered thee of all mortals the most wretched :
But I behold great Agamemnon come,
And therefore, O my friends, let us be silent.

AGAMEMNON, HECUBA, CHORUS.

AGA. Whence this delay ? why go you not t' inter,
O Hecuba, your daughter, whom Talthybius
Directed that no Greek might be allowed
To touch ? We therefore have with your request
Complied, nor moved the corse. But you remain
Inactive, which I wonder at, and come
To fetch you, for each previous solemn rite
That best might please, if aught such rites can please,
Have we performed. But ah, what Trojan youth
Do I behold lie breathless in the tent ?
For that he was no Greek, the garb informs me
In which he's clad.

HEC. Thou wretch, for of myself
I speak, when thee, O Hecuba, I name ;
What shall I do, at Agamemnon's knees
Fall prostrate, or in silence bear my woes ?

AGA. Why weep, with face averted, yet refuse
T' inform me what hath happened ? who is he ?

HEC. But from his knees, if, deeming me a slave
And enemy, the monarch should repel me,
This would but make my sorrows yet more poignant.

AGA. I am no seer, nor can I uninformed
Trace out the secret purpose of your soul.

HEC. Am I mistaken then, while I suppose
A foe in him who doth not mean me ill ?

AGA. If 'tis your wish I should not be apprized,
We both are of one mind ; you will not speak,
And I as little am disposed to hear.

HEC. Without his aid no vengeance for my child

Can I obtain : yet why deliberate thus ?
 Prosper or fail I must take courage now.
 O royal Agamemnon, by those knees
 A suppliant I conjure you, by that beard,
 And that right hand, victorious o'er your foes.

AGA. What do you wish for ? To obtain your freedom ?
 This were not difficult.

HEC. No, give me vengeance
 On yonder guilty wretch, and I am willing
 To linger out the remnant of my life
 In servitude.

AGA. Then why implore our aid ?

HEC. For reasons you suspect not. Do you see
 That breathless corse o'er which my tears I shed ?

AGA. The corse I see ; but cannot comprehend
 What follows next.

HEC. Him erst I bore and nurtured.

AGA. Is the deceased, O miserable dame,
 One of your children ?

HEC. Not of those who fell
 Beneath Troy's walls.

AGA. What ! had you other sons ?

HEC. Yes, him you see, born in an evil hour.

AGA. But where was he when Ilion was destroyed ?

HEC. His father, apprehensive of his death,
 Conveyed him thence.

AGA. From all the other children
 Which then he had, where placed he this apart ?

HEC. In this same region where his corse was found.

AGA. With Polymestor, sovereign of the land ?

HEC. He, to preserve that execrable gold,
 Was hither sent.

AGA. But, by what ruthless hand,
 And how, was he despatched ?

HEC. By whom beside ?
 The murderer was his friend, the Thracian king.

AGA. Was he thus eager ? O abandoned wretch,
 To seize the gold !

HEC. E'en thus ; soon as he knew
 Troy was o'erthrown.

AGA. But where did you discover
 The body, or who brought it ?

HEC. On the shore
 This servant found it.

AGA. Or in quest of him
 Or other task then busied ?

HEC. To fetch water
 To lave Polyxena's remains she went.

AGA. When he had slain him, it appears, his friend
Did cast him forth.

HEC. He to the waves consigned
The stripling's mangled corse.

AGA. O wretched woman,
Surrounded by immeasurable woes.

HEC. I am undone ; no farther ill remains
For me t' experience.

AGA. Ah ! what woman e'er
Was born to such calamities ?

HEC. Not one
Exists, whose sorrows equal mine, unless
You of Calamity herself would speak.
Yet hear the motive why I clasp your knees.
If I appear to merit what I suffer,
I must be patient ; but if not, avenge
My wrongs upon the man who 'gainst his guest
Such treachery could commit, who, nor the gods
Of Erebus beneath, nor those who rule
In Heaven above regarding, this vile deed,
Did perpetrate, e'en he with whom I oft
Partook the feast, on whom I showered each bounty,
Esteeming him the first of all my friends ;
Yet, when at Ilion's palace with respect
He had been treated, a deliberate scheme
Of murder forming, he destroyed my son,
On whom he deigned not to bestow a tomb,
But threw his corse into the briny deep.
Though I indeed am feeble, and a slave,
Yet mighty are the gods, and by their law
The world is ruled : for by that law we learn
That there are gods, and can mark out the bounds
Of justice and injustice ; if such law
To you transmitted, be infringed, if they
Who kill their guests, or dare with impious hand
To violate the altars of the gods,
Unpunished 'scape, no equity is left
Among mankind. Deeming such base connivance
Unworthy of yourself, revere my woes,
Have pity on me, like a painter take
Your stand to view me, and observe the number
Of my afflictions ; once was I a queen,
But now am I a slave ; in many a son
I once was rich, but now am I both old
And of my children reft, without a city,
Forlorn, and of all mortals the most wretched.
But whither would you go ? With you I seem
To have no interest. Miserable me !

Why do we mortals by assiduous toil,
 And such a painful search as their importance
 Makes requisite, all other arts attain,
 Yet not enough intent on the due knowledge
 Of that sole empress of the human soul
 Persuasion, no rewards bestow on those
 Who teach us by insinuating words
 How to procure our wishes? who can trust
 Hereafter in prosperity? That band
 Of my heroic sons is now no more,
 Myself a captive, am led forth to tasks
 Unseemly, and e'en now these eyes behold
 The air obscured by Ilion's rising smoke.
 It might be vain perhaps, were I to found
 A claim to your assistance on your love :
 Yet must I speak : my daughter, who in Troy
 Was called Cassandra, the prophetic dame,
 Partakes your bed ; and how those rapturous nights
 Will you acknowledge, or to her how show
 Your gratitude for all the fond embraces
 Which she bestows, O king, or in her stead
 To me her mother? In the soul of man
 Th' endearments of the night, by darkness veiled,
 Create the strongest interest. To my tale
 Now listen : do you see that breathless corse?
 Each act of kindness which to him is shown,
 Upon a kinsman of the dame you love
 Will be conferred. But, in one point my speech
 Is yet deficient. By the wondrous arts
 Of Dædalus, or some benignant god,
 Could I give voice to each arm, hand, and hair,
 And each extremest joint, they round your knees
 Should cling together, and together weep,
 At once combining with a thousand tongues.
 O monarch, O thou light of Greece, comply,
 And stretch forth that avenging arm to aid
 An aged woman, though she be a thing
 Of nought, O succour : for the good man's duty
 Is to obey the dread behests of justice,
 And ever punish those who act amiss.

CHOR. 'Tis wonderful, indeed, how all events
 Happen to mortals, and the dread behests
 Of fate, uncircumscribed by human laws,
 Constrain us to form amities with those
 To whom the most inveterate hate we bore,
 And into foes convert our former friends.

AGA. To you, O Hecuba, your son, your fortunes,
 And your entreaties, is my pity due.
 I in obedience to the gods and justice

Wish to avenge you on this impious friend,
 Could I appear your interests to espouse,
 Without the troops suspecting that I slay
 The Thracian monarch for Cassandra's sake :
 My terrors hence arise ; the host esteem
 Him our ally, and the deceased a foe :
 What though you held him dear, his fate, the loss
 Of you alone, affects not the whole camp.
 Reflect too, that you find me well disposed
 To share your toils, and in your cause exert
 My utmost vigour ; but, what makes me slow,
 Is a well-grounded fear of blame from Greece.

HEC. Alas ! there's no man free : for some are slaves

To gold, to fortune others, and the rest,
 The multitude or written laws restrain
 From acting as their better judgment dictates.
 But since you are alarmed, and to the rabble
 Yield an implicit deference, from that fear
 I will release you ; only to my schemes
 Be privy, if some mischief I contrive
 Against the murderer of my son : but take
 No active part. If, when the Thracian suffers,
 As he shall suffer, 'mongst the Greeks a tumult
 Break forth, or they attempt to succour him,
 Restrain them, without seeming to befriend
 My interests. As for what remains, rely
 On me, and I will manage all things well.

AGA. How then ? what mean you ? With that aged hand
 To wield a sword, and take away the life
 Of that barbarian, or by drugs endued
 With magic power ? the help you need, what arts
 Can furnish ? what strong arm have you to fight
 Your battles ? whence will you procure allies ?

HEC. These tents conceal a group of Trojan dames.

AGA. Mean you those captives whom the Greeks have
 seized.

HEC. With them I on the murderer will inflict
 Due punishment.

AGA. How can the female sex
 O'er men obtain a conquest ?

HEC. Numbers strike
 A foe with terror, and the wiles of women
 Are hard to be withstood.

AGA. They may strike terror,
 But in their courage I no trust can place.

HEC. What ? did not women slay Ægyptus' sons,
 And in their rage exterminate each male
 From Lemnos ? But leave me to find out means
 How to effect my purpose. Through the camp

In safety this my faithful servant send ;
 And thou, when to my Thracian friend thou com'st,
 Say, " Hecuba, erst Queen of Troy, invites
 Thee and thy children, on thy own account,
 No less than hers, because she to thy sons
 And thee the self-same message must deliver."
 The newly slain Polyxena's interment
 Defer, O Agamemnon ; in one flame
 That when their kindred corpses are consumed ;
 The brother with the sister, who demand
 A twofold portion of their mother's grief
 Together may be buried in one grave.

AGA. These rites shall be performed, which could the
 troops

Set sail, I needs must have denied : but now,
 Since Neptune sends not an auspicious breeze,
 Expecting a more seasonable voyage,
 Here must we wait. But may success attend you ;
 For 'tis the common interest of mankind,
 Of every individual, every state,
 That he who hath transgressed should suffer ill,
 And fortune crown the efforts of the virtuous.

[*Exit* AGAMEMNON.]

CHORUS.

I. 1.

No more, O Troy, thy dreaded name
 Conspicuous in the lists of fame,
 'Midst fortresses impregnable shall stand,
 In such thick clouds an armed host
 Pours terrors from the Grecian coast,
 And wastes thy vanquished land :
 Shorn from thy rampired brow the crown
 Of turrets fell ; thy palaces o'erspread
 With smoke lie waste, no more I tread
 Thy wonted streets, my native town.

I. 2.

I perished at the midnight hour,
 When, aided by the banquet's power,
 Sleep o'er my eyes his earliest influence shed ;
 Retiring from the choral song,
 The sacrifice and festive throng,
 Stretched on the downy bed
 The bridegroom indolently lay,
 His massive spear suspended on the beam,
 No more he saw the helmets gleam,
 Or nautic troops in dread array.

II. 1.

While me the golden mirror's aid,
My flowing tresses taught to braid
In graceful ringlets with a fillet bound,
Just as I cast my robe aside,
And sought the couch ; extending wide
Through every street this sound
Was heard ; " O when, ye sons of Greece,
This nest of robbers levelled with the plain,
Will ye behold your homes again ?
When shall these tedious labours cease ? "

II. 2.

Then from my couch up starting, drest
Like Spartan nymph in zoneless vest,
At Dian's shrine an ineffectual prayer
Did I address ; for hither led,
First having viewed my husband dead,
Full oft I in despair,
As the proud vessel sailed from land,
Looked back, and saw my native walls laid low,
Then fainting with excess of woe
At length lost sight of Ilion's strand.

III.

Helen that sister to the sons of Jove,
And Paris Ida's swain,
With my curses still pursuing,
For to them I owe my ruin,
Me they from my country drove,
Never to return again,
By that detested spousal rite
On which Hymen never smiled,
No, 'twas some demon who with lewd delight
Their frantic souls beguiled :
Her may ocean's waves no more
Waft to her paternal shore.

POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

POLYM. For thee, O Priam, my unhappy friend,
And you, my dearest Hecuba, I weep,
Beholding your distress, your city taken,
Your daughter newly slain : alas ! there's nought
To be relied on ; fame is insecure,
Nor can the prosperous their enjoyments guard
Against a change of Fortune, for the gods
Backward and forward turn her wavering wheel,
And introduce confusion in the world,
That we, because we know not will happen,

May worship them. But of what use are complaints
Which have no virtue to remove our woes ?
If you my absence censure, be appeased,
For in the midst of Thracia's wide domains
I from these coasts was distant at the time
Of your arrival : soon as I returned,
When from the palace I was issuing forth,
This your attendant met me, and delivered
The message, hearing which, I hither came.

HEC. O Polymestor, wretched as I am,
I blush to see thy face ; because thou erst
In happier days didst know me, I with shame
Appear before thee in my present fortunes.
Nor can I look at thee with steadfast eyes :
But this thou wilt not deem to be a mark
Of enmity : the cause of such behaviour
Is only custom, which forbids our sex
To gaze on men.

POLYM. No wonder you thus act
Under such circumstances. But what need
Have you of me, and wherefore did you send
To fetch me from the palace ?

HEC. I in private
A secret of importance would disclose
To thee and to thy children. From these tents
Give orders for thy followers to depart.

POLYM. [*to his attendants, who retire.*]
Withdraw ; this solitary spot is safe.
For you and the confederate Grecian host
Are all attached to me. But 'tis incumbent
On you t' inform me what my prosperous fortunes
Can yield to succour my unhappy friends !
For this is what I wish to do.

HEC. Say first,
If he, my son, whom this maternal hand
And his fond father in thy mansions placed,
My Polydore, yet live. I'll then pursue
My questions.

POLYM. Yes, in him you still are blest.

HEC. How kind, how worthy of thyself that speech,
My dearest friend !

POLYM. What farther would you know ?

HEC. If haply yet the youth remember aught
Of me his mother.

POLYM. Much he wished to come
And visit you in private.

HEC. Is the gold
He brought from Troy preserved ?

POLYM. I keep it safe
In my own palace.
HEC. Keep it if thou wilt :
But covet not the treasures of thy friends.
POLYM. I do not covet them ; my utmost wish
Is to enjoy, O woman, what I have.
HEC. Know'st thou then, what to thee and to thy sons
I want to say ?
POLYM. I know not ; till in words
Your thoughts are signified.
HEC. Bestow such love
On Polydore as thou receiv'st from me.
POLYM. What is it that to me and to my children
You would disclose ?
HEC. The spot, where deep in earth,
The ancient treasures of all Priam's house
Lie buried.
POLYM. Is this secret what you wish
Should to your son be mentioned ?
HEC. Yes, by thee,
Because thou art a virtuous man !
POLYM. But wherefore
Did you require these children should be present ?
HEC. For them to know the secret, if thou die,
Will be of great advantage.
POLYM. You have spoken
Well and discreetly.
HEC. Know'st thou where at Troy
Minerva's temple stands ?
POLYM. Is the gold there ?
But by what mark shall I the spot distinguish ?
HEC. Above the surface rises a black stone.
POLYM. Will you describe the place yet more minutely ?
HEC. The gold I in thy custody would place,
Which I from Ilion hither bring.
POLYM. Where is it ?
Concealed beneath your garment ?
HEC. 'Midst a heap
Of spoils laid up within yon tents.
POLYM. Where mean you ?
These are the Grecian mariners' abode.
HEC. In separate dwellings have they placed the captives ?
POLYM. But how can we rely upon the faith
Of those within ? doth no man thither come ?
HEC. There's not a Greek within ; we are alone :
But enter thou these doors : for now the host,
Impatient to weigh anchor, would return
From Ilion to their homes. Thou with thy children

T' accomplish all the dread behests of fate,
Shalt thither go where thou hast lodged my son.

[*Exeunt* HECUBA and POLYMESTOR.]

CHOR. Thou hast not yet received the blow,
But justice sure will lay thee low.
Like him who headlong from on high
Falls where no friendly haven's nigh,
Into the ocean's stormy wave,
Here shalt thou find a certain grave:
For twofold ruin doth impend
O'er him who human laws pursue,
And righteous gods indignant view:
Thee shall the hope of gain mislead,
Which prompts thee to advance with speed,
And Pluto's loathed abode descend:
Soon shalt thou press th' ensanguined strand,
Slain by a woman's feeble hand.

POLYM. [*within.*] Ah me, the light that visited these eyes
Is darkened.

SEMICHOR. Heard ye, O my friends, the shriek
Of yonder Thracian?

POLYM. [*within.*] Yet again, alas,
My children's foul and execrable murder!

SEMICHOR. My friends, some recent mischief hath within
Been perpetrated.

POLYM. [*within.*] Though your feet are swift,
Ye shall not 'scape, for through the walls I'll burst
My passage.

SEMICHOR. With a forceful hand, behold
He brandishes the javelin. Shall we rush
To seize him? This important crisis bids us
Assist our queen and Phrygia's valiant dames.

HEC. Now do thy worst, and from their hinges rend
Yon massive gates; no more canst thou impart
To those lost eyes their visual orbs, nor see
Thy sons, whom I have slain, to life restored.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Hast thou, my honoured mistress, caught the Thracian,
Over this treacherous friend hast thou prevailed,
And all thy threats accomplished?

HEC. Ye shall see him
Before the tent, without delay, deprived
Of sight, advancing with unsteady foot,
And the two breathless corpses of his sons,
Whom I, assisted by the noblest matrons
Of Troy, have slain. Th' atonement he hath paid
To my revenge, is just. But now behold

He issues forth : I will retire and shun
The Thracian chief's unconquerable rage.

POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

POLYM. Ah, whither am I going? wretched me!
Where am I? what supports me? With these hands
Groping my way like some four-footed beast,
How shall I turn me, to the right or left,
That I those murderous Phrygian dames may seize
Who have destroyed me? Impious and accurst
Daughters of Ilion, in what dark recess
Do they escape me? Would to heaven, O Sun,
Thou to these bleeding eyeballs could'st afford
A cure, that thou my blindness could'st remove.
But hush, I hear those women's cautious tread.
How shall I leap upon them? with their flesh
How shall I glut my rage, and for a feast
To hungry tigers cast their mangled bones,
In just requital of the horrid wrongs,
Which I from them, ah wretched me, have suffered?
But whither, by what impulse am I borne,
Leaving the corpses of my sons exposed
To hellish Bacchanalians, as they lie
Torn by the dogs, and on the mountain's ridge
Cast forth unburied! Where shall I stand still?
Or whither shall I go? Like some proud bark
Towed into harbour, which contracts its sails;
I to that fatal chamber which contains
The corpses of my murdered sons rush onward
With speed involuntary.

CHOR. Hapless man,
How art thou visited by woes too grievous
To be endured! but by dread Jove thy foe,
On him whose deeds are base, it is ordained
That the severest punishments await.

POLYM. Rouse, O ye Thracians, armed with ponderous
spears,
Arrayed in mail, for generous steeds renowned,
A hardy race, whom Mars himself inspires.
To you, O Grecian troops, and both the sons
Of Atreus, I with clamorous voice appeal:
Come hither, I implore you by the gods.
Do any of you hear me? Is there none
Who will assist? Why loiter ye? Those women,
Those captives have destroyed me. Horrid wrongs
Have I endured; ah me, the foul reproach!
But whither shall I turn, or whither go?
Through the ærial regions shall I wing
My swift career to that sublime abode

Where Sirius or Orion from his eyes
Darts radiant flames? or, to perdition doomed,
Shall I descend to Pluto's sable flood?

CHOR. He merits pardon, whosoe'er assailed
By ills too grievous to be borne, shakes off
The loathed encumbrance of a wretched life.

AGAMEMNON, POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

AGA. Hearing thy shrieks I came. For Echo, child
Of craggy mountains, in no gentle note
Wafted those sounds tumultuous through the host.
Had we not known that by the Grecian spear
The towers of vanquished Phrygia are o'erthrown,
Such uproar would have caused no small alarm.

POLYM. My dearest friend, soon as I heard your voice,
I instantly perceived 'twas Agamemnon.
See you my sufferings?

AGA. Wretched Polymestor!
Who hath destroyed thee? who bereaved of sight
Thy bleeding orbs, and those thy children slew?
Whoe'er the author of such deeds, his rage
Was dreadful sure 'gainst thee and 'gainst thy sons.

POLYM. With the assistance of those captive dames,
Me Hecuba hath murdered, more than murdered.

AGA. What mean'st thou? Are you guilty of the crime
With which he charges you? and have you dared
To perpetrate an action thus audacious?

POLYM. Ah me! what said you? Is she near at hand?
Inform me where to find, that I may seize her,
And scatter wide to all the fowls of heaven
Her mangled corse.

AGA. Ha! what is thy design?

POLYM. Allow me, I conjure you by the gods,
To grasp her with this frantic arm.

AGA. Desist,
And casting forth all rancour from thy heart,
Now plead thy cause; that, hearing both apart,
I with unbiassed justice may decide,
If thou these sufferings merit'st.

POLYM. I will speak.
There was one Polydore, the youngest son
Of those whom Hecuba to Priam bore;
Him erst removing from the Phrygian realm,
His sire to me consigned, that in my palace
He might be nurtured, when that hoary king
The fall of Troy suspected: him I slew:
But hear my motives for the deed, to prove
How justly and how prudently I acted,

Your enemy, that boy, if he survived
The ruin of his country, might, I feared,
Collect the scattered citizens of Troy,
And there again reside. I also feared,
That when the Greeks knew one of Priam's line
Was living, with a second fleet invading
The shores of Phrygia, they again might drain
Of their inhabitants our Thracian fields,
Involving us, their neighbours, in the vengeance
They on their foes at Ilion wreak. To us
Already hath such neighbourhood, O king,
Proved baneful. But, apprized of her son's fate,
Hecuba drew me hither, on pretence
She would inform me where in massive gold
The hidden treasures of old Priam's race
Beneath Troy's ruins were secured. Alone,
She with my children brought me to this tent,
That none beside might know. With bended knee,
While on a couch I sat, some on my left,
And others on my right, as with a friend,
Full many of the Trojan damsels took
Their places, holding up against the sun
My robe, the woof of an Edonian loom :
Some feigned t' admire it, others viewed my spear,
And stripped me of them both. From hand to hand
The matrons, seeming to caress my children,
Removed them far from their unhappy sire :
And after their fond speeches, in an instant,
(Could you believe it ?) snatching up the swords,
Which they beneath their garments had concealed,
They stabbed my sons, whom while I strove to aid,
In hostile guise their comrades held my arms
And feet : if I looked up, they by the hair
Confined me ; if I moved my hands, my struggles
Proved ineffectual, through the numerous band
Of women who assailed me, and to close
The scene of my calamity, accomplished
A deed with more than common horror fraught,
For they tore out my bleeding eyes, and fled.
But, like a tiger starting up, I chased
These ruthless fiends, and with a hunter's speed
Each wall examined, dashing to the ground,
And breaking what I seized. These cruel wrongs,
While I your interests study to maintain,
O Agamemnon, and despatch your foe,
Have I endured. To spare a long harangue,
The whole of what 'gainst woman hath been said
By those of ancient times, is saying now,
Or shall be said hereafter, in few words

Will I comprise ; nor ocean's waves, nor earth,
Nurture so vile a race, as he who most
Hath with the sex conversed, but knows too well.

CHOR. Curb that audacious virulence of speech,
Nor, by thy woes embittered, thus revile
All womankind ; the number of our sex
Is great, and some there are, whom as a mark
To envy, their distinguished worth holds forth,
Though some are justly numbered with the wicked.

HEC. O Agamemnon, never ought the tongue
To have a greater influence o'er mankind
Than actions ; but whoever hath done well,
Ought to speak well ; and he, whose deeds are base,
To use unseemly language, nor find means
By specious words to colour o'er injustice.
Full wise indeed are they to whom such art
Is most familiar : but to stand the test
Of time not wise enough ; for they all perish,
Not one of them e'er 'scapes. These previous thoughts
To you, O mighty king, have I addressed.
But now to him I turn, and will refute
The fallacies he uttered. What pretence
Hast thou for saying, that to free the Greeks
From such a second war, and for the sake
Of Agamemnon, thou didst slay my son ?
For first, O villain, the barbarian race
With Greece, nor will, nor ever can be friends.
What interest roused thy zeal ? Didst thou expect
To form a nuptial union ? Wert thou moved
By kindred ties, or any secret cause ?
Greece with a fleet forsooth would have returned
To lay thy country waste. Who, canst thou think,
Will credit such assertions ? If the truth
Thou wilt confess, gold and thy thirst of gain
Were my son's murderers. Why, when Troy yet flourished,
Why, when the city was on every side
Fenced by strong bulwarks, why, when Priam lived,
And Hector wielded a victorious spear,
Didst thou not, if thou hadst designed to act
In Agamemnon's favour, at the time
When thou didst nurture my unhappy son,
And in thy palace shelter, either slay,
Or to the Greeks surrender up the youth
A living prisoner ? But when Ilion's light
Was utterly extinguished, when the smoke
Declared the city subject to our foes,
The stranger thou didst murder, at thy hearth
Who sought protection. To confirm thy guilt,
Now hear this farther charge : if thou to Greece

Hadst been a friend indeed, thou should'st have given
 The gold thou say'st thou keep'st, not for thine own,
 But Agamemnon's sake, among the troops
 Who suffer want, and from their native land
 Have for a tedious season been detained.
 But thou from those rapacious hands e'en now
 Canst not endure to part with it, but hoard'st it
 Still buried in thy coffers: as became thee,
 Hadst thou trained up my son, hadst thou to him
 Been a protector, great is the renown
 Thou would'st have gained; for in distress the good
 Are steadfast; but our prosperous fortunes swarm
 With friends unbidden. Hadst thou been in want,
 And Polydore abounded, a sure treasure
 To thee would he have proved: but now no longer
 In him hast thou a friend; thou of thy gold
 Hast lost th' enjoyment, thou thy sons hast lost,
 And art thyself thus wretched. But to you,
 O Agamemnon, now again I speak:
 If you assist him, you will seem corrupt;
 For you will benefit a man devoid
 Of honour, justice, piety, or truth;
 It might be said that you delight in evil;
 But, I presume not to reproach my lords.

CHOR. How doth a virtuous cause inspire the tongue
 With virtuous language!

AGA. On a stranger's woes
 Reluctant I pronounce, but am constrained;
 For shame attends the man who takes in hand
 Some great affair, and leaves it undecided.
 Know then, to me thou seem'st not to have slain
 Thy guest through an attachment to my cause,
 Nor yet to that of Greece, but that his gold
 Thou might'st retain: though in this wretched state
 Thou speak to serve thy interests. Among you
 Perhaps the murder of your guests seems light;
 We Greeks esteem it base. If I acquit thee
 How shall I 'scape reproach? Indeed I cannot:
 Since thou hast dared to perpetrate the crime,
 Endure the consequence.

POLYM. Too plain it seems,
 Ah me! that, vanquished by a female slave,
 Here shall I perish by ignoble hands.

HEC. Is not this just for the atrocious deed
 Which thou hast wrought?

POLYM. My children, wretched me!
 And these quenched orbs.

HEC. Grief'st thou, yet think'st thou not
 That I lament my son?

- POLYM. Malignant woman,
Do you rejoice in taunting my distress ?
HEC. In such revenge have not I cause for joy ?
POLYM. Yet not so hastily, when ocean's wave——
HEC. Shall in a bark convey me to the shores
Of Greece ?
POLYM. Shall overwhelm you in its vast abyss
Fall'n from the shrouds.
HEC. Raised thither by what impulse ?
POLYM. Up the tall mast you with swift foot shall climb.
HEC. On feathered pinions borne, or how ?
POLYM. With form
Canine endued, and eyeballs glaring fire.
HEC. Whence didst thou learn that I such wondrous change
Shall undergo ?
POLYM. Bacchus, the Thracian seer,
Gave this response.
HEC. To thee did he unfold
Nought of the grievous sufferings thou endur'st ?
POLYM. Then could you ne'er have caught me by your wiles.
HEC. But on this change of being, after death,
Or while I yet am living, shall I enter ?
POLYM. After your death, and men shall call your tomb——
HEC. By my new form, or what is it thou mean'st ?
POLYM. The sepulchre of that vile brute, an object
Conspicuous to the mariner.
HEC. I care not ;
My vengeance is complete.
POLYM. Cassandra too,
Your daughter, must inevitably bleed.
HEC. Abomination ! On thy guilty head
These curses I retort.
POLYM. Her shall the wife
Of Agamemnon slay, who sternly guards
His royal mansion.
HEC. Such a frantic deed
As this may Tyndarus' daughter ne'er commit !
POLYM. She next uplifting the remorseless axe
Shall smite her lord.
AGA. Ha ! madman, dost thou court
Thy ruin ?
POLYM. Slay me ; for the murderous bath
Awaits you, when to Argos you return.
AGA. Will ye not drag him from my sight by force ?
POLYM. Hear you with grief what I announce ?
AGA. My followers,
Why stop ye not the miscreant's boding mouth ?
POLYM. This mouth be closed for ever : I have spoken.
AGA. Will ye not cast him with the utmost speed

Upon some desert island, since he dares
To speak with such licentiousness? Depart,
O wretched Hecuba, and both those corpses
Deposit in the grave. But, as for you,
Ye to your lord's pavilions must repair,
O Phrygian dames : for I perceive the gales
Rising to waft us homeward ; may success
Attend the voyage to our native land !
And in our mansions may we find all well,
Freed from these dangers !

CHOR. To the haven go,
And to the tents, my friends, t' endure the toils
Our lords impose : for thus harsh fate enjoins.

HERCULES DISTRACTED.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA. •

AMPHITRYON.

MEGARA.

CHORUS OF THEBAN OLD

MEN.

HERCULES.

LYCUS.

IRIS.

A FIEND.

MESSSENGER.

THESEUS.

SCENE.—BEFORE THE ALTAR OF JUPITER, AT THE ENTRANCE
OF THE HOUSE OF HERCULES IN THEBES.

AMPHITRYON, MEGARA.

AMP. Is there on earth, a stranger to the man
Who shared the same auspicious nuptial bed
With Jove, Amphitryon born at Argos, sprung
From Perseus' son Alcæus, me the sire
Of Hercules? He in these regions dwelt,
Where from the soil a helmed crop arose ;
Mars, a small number of that race, preserved,
Whose children's children people Cadmus' city.
Hence Creon king of Thebes, Menæceus' son,
Derives his birth, and Creon is the sire
Of this unhappy Megara, to grace
Whose hymeneal pomp, each Theban erst
Attuned the jocund lute, into my house
When Hercules conducted her. But leaving
This realm where I resided, and his consort
And kindred, my son chose to fix his seat
Within the walls of Argos, of that city
Erected by the Cyclops, whence I fled
Stained with Electryon's gore : but to alleviate
My woes, and in his native land obtain
A quiet residence, this great reward
He on Eurystheus promised to bestow,
That he would rid the world of every pest :
Harassed by Juno's stings, or envious fate,
With her conspiring : but, his other labours
Accomplished, he through Tænarus' jaws at length

Went to the house of Pluto, to drag forth
Into the realms of day hell's triple hound :
He thence returns not. But an old tradition
Among the race of Cadmus hath prevailed,
That Lycus, Dirce's husband, erst bore rule
Over this city, till Jove's sons, Amphion
And Zethus, who on milk-white coursers rode,
Became its sovereigns. Lycus' son who bears
His father's name, no Theban, but arriving
From the Eubœan state, slew royal Creon,
And having slain him, seized the throne, invading
The city with tumultuous broils convulsed.
But the affinity which we have formed
With Creon, seems to be my greatest curse :
For while my son stays in the realms beneath,
Lycus th' egregious monarch of this land
Would with the children of Alcides kill
His consort, by fresh murders to extinguish
The past, and kill me too (if one through age
So useless may be numbered among men),
Lest when the boys attain maturer age,
They should avenge their grandsire Creon's death.
But I (for my son left me here to tend
His children, and direct the house, since he
Entered the subterraneous realms of night),
With their afflicted mother, lest the race
Of Hercules should bleed, for an asylum
Have chosen this altar of protecting Jove,
Which my illustrious son for a memorial
Of his victorious arms did here erect,
When he in battle had subdued the Minyans.
But we, though destitute of every comfort,
Of food, drink, clothing, though constrained to lie
On the bare pavement, here maintain our seat,
For every hospitable door is barred
Against us, and we have no other hope
Of being saved. Some of our friends I see
Are faithless, and the few who prove sincere,
Too weak to aid us. Such is the effect
Of adverse fortune o'er the race of men ;
May he to whom I bear the least attachment,
Never experience that unerring test
Of friendship.

MEG. Thou old man, who erst didst storm
The Taphian ramparts, when thou with renown
Didst lead the host of Thebes ; the secret will
Of Heaven, how little can frail mortals know !
For to me too of no avail have proved
The fortunes of my father, who elate

With wealth and regal power (whence at the breasts
 Of its possessors spears are hurled by those
 Whose souls the lust of mad ambition fires),
 And having children, gave me to thy son,
 Joining a noble consort in the bonds
 Of wedlock with Alcides, through whose death
 These blessings are all fled. Now I, and thou,
 Old man, are doomed to perish with the sons
 Of Hercules, whom, as the bird extends
 Her sheltering wings over her callow brood,
 I guard. By turns they come and question me :
 " O mother, whither is my father gone ?
 What is he doing ? when will he return ?"
 Though now too young sufficiently to feel
 How great their loss, thus ask they for their sire.
 I change the theme, and forge a soothing tale,
 But am with wonder smitten when the doors
 Creak on their massive hinges, and at once
 They all start up, that at their father's knees
 They may fall prostrate. But what hope hast thou
 Of saving us, or what support, old man ?
 For I to thee look up. We from the bounds
 Of these domains unnoticed cannot 'scape ;
 Mightier than us, a watchful guard is placed
 At every avenue, and in our friends
 No longer for protection can we trust.
 Explain thyself, if thou hast any scheme,
 By which thou from impending death canst save us ;
 But let us strive to lengthen out the time,
 Since we are feeble.

AMP. 'Tis no easy task
 In such a situation, O my daughter,
 To form a sure and instantaneous judgment.

MEG. What is there wanting to complete thy woes,
 Or why art thou so fond of life ?

AMP. That blessing
 I still enjoy, still cherish pleasing hopes.

MEG. I also hope, old man : but it is folly
 To look for what we never can attain.

AMP. We by delaying might avert our fate.

MEG. But I in this sad interval of time
 Feel piercing anguish.

AMP. The auspicious gales
 Of fortune, O my daughter, yet may waft
 Both you and me out of our present troubles,
 If e'er my son your valiant lord return.
 But O be pacified yourself, and cause
 Your children to dry up their streaming tears ;
 With gentle language and delusive tales

Begule them, though all fraudulent arts are wretched.
For the disasters which afflict mankind
Are wearied out ; the stormy winds retain not
Their undiminished force ; nor are the blest
Perpetually blest : for all things change,
And widely differ from their former state.
The valiant man is he who still holds fast
His hopes ; but to despair bespeaks the coward.

CHORUS, AMPHITRYON, MEGARA.

CHOR. Propped on my faithful staff, from home,
And from the couch of palsied age,
In melancholy guise I roam,
Constrained to chaunt funereal strains,
As the expiring swan complains,
A war of words alone I wage,
In semblance, but a fitting sprite,
An airy vision of the night.
I totter ; yet doth active zeal
This faithful bosom still inspire.
Ye children who have lost your sire,
Thou veteran, and thou aged dame,
Doomed for thy lord these griefs to feel,
Whose Pluto's dreary mansions claim ;
O weary not your tender feet.
Like steeds by galling harness bound,
To turn the ponderous mill around,
I would advance my friends to meet,
Yet are my utmost efforts vain,
This shattered frame I scarce sustain :
Draw near, O take this trembling hand,
And holding fast my robe, support
My steps, thy needful aid I court,
Because I am too weak to stand.
Lead on the chief, though now by years
Bowed down, who marshalled on the strand,
His comrades erst a hardy band ;
With him in youth we launched our spears,
Nor then belied our native land.
See how their eyes dart liquid fire,
Those children emulate their sire ;
But still hereditary fate,
Pursues with unrelenting hate
Their tender years, nor can their charms
Redeem them from impending harms.
What valiant champions of thy cause,
O Greece, thy violated laws,
When these thy great supports shall fail,
Torn from thy fostering land wilt thou bewail.

But I behold the monarch of the realm,
Tyrannic Lycus, who these doors approaches.

LYCUS, AMPHITRYON, MEGARA, CHORUS.

LYC. This question (if I may) I to the sire
And consort of Alcides would propose
(But, as your king, I have a right to make
Any inquiries I think fit): How long
Seek ye to spin out life? What farther hope
Have ye in view, what succour to ward off
The stroke of death? Expect ye that the father
Of these deserted children, who lies stretched
Amid the realms beneath will thence return,
That ye bely your rank, and meanly utter
These clamorous plaints on being doomed to die?
Through Greece hast *thou* diffused an idle boast,
That Jove enjoyed thy consort, and begot
An offspring like himself; while *you* exulted
In being called wife to the first of heroes.
But what great action hath your lord performed,
In having slain that hydra at the lake,
Or the Nemæan lion whom with snares
He caught, and then did arrogantly boast
That he had strangled in his nervous arms?
Will these exploits enable you to vie
With me? and for such merit am I bound
To spare the sons of Hercules, who gained
A name which he deserved not? He was brave
In waging war with beasts, in nought beside,
With his left hand he never did sustain
The shield, nor faced he the protended spear,
But with his bow, that weapon of a dastard,
Was still prepared for flight: such arms afford
No proof of courage; but the truly brave
Is he who in the ranks where he is stationed
Maintains his ground, and sees with steadfast eye
Those ghastly wounds the missile javelin gives.
Old man, I act not thus through cruelty,
But caution; for I know that I have slain
Creon *her* father, and possess his throne.
These children therefore will not I allow
To live till they attain maturer years,
Lest they should punish me for such a deed.

AMP. Jove will assert the cause of his own son.
But as for me, O Hercules, my care
Shall be to prove the folly of this tyrant:
For thy illustrious name I will not suffer
To be reproached. First from a hateful charge

(And that of cowardice I deem most hateful),
Calling the gods to witness, am I bound
To vindicate thy honour. I appeal
To Jove's own thunder, and th' impetuous steeds,
Which drew Alcides' chariot when he sped
Those winged arrows to transpierce the flanks
Of earth-born giants, and among the gods
Triumphant revelled at the genial board.
Go next to Pholoe's realm, thou worst of kings,
And ask the Centaurs' monstrous brood, what man
They judge to be most brave, whether that title
Belongs not to my son, who only bears,
As you assert, the semblance of a hero?
But should you question the Eubœan mount
Of Dirphys, where your infancy was nurtured,
It cannot sound your praise: you have performed
No glorious action for your native land
To testify, yet scorn that wise invention
The quiver fraught with shafts: attend to me
And I will teach you wisdom. By his arms
Encumbered, stands the warrior who is sheathed
In ponderous mail, and through the fears of those
Who fight in the same rank, if they want courage,
Loses his life; nor, if his spear be broken,
Furnished with nought but courage, from his breast
Can he repel the wound; but he who bends
With skilful hand the bow, hath this advantage,
Which never fails him: with a thousand shafts
He smites the foe, no danger to himself
Incurring, but securely stands aloof,
And wreaks his vengeance while they gaze around,
Without perceiving whence the weapon comes:
His person he exposes not, but takes
A guarded post: for what in war displays
The greatest prudence, is to vex the foe,
Nor rush at random on their pointed spears.
Such reasoning on the subject in debate
With yours indeed agrees not: but what cause
Have you for wishing to destroy these children?
How have they injured you? In one respect
I deem you wise, because you dread the race
Of valiant men, and feel yourself a coward:
Yet is it hard on us, if we must bleed
Your apprehensions to remove; you ought
To suffer all we would inflict, from us
Whose merit is superior far to yours,
Were Jove impartial. Would you therefore wield
The sceptre of this land, let us depart
As exiles from the realm, or you shall meet

With strict retaliation, when the gales
 Of wavering fortune alter. O thou land
 Of Cadmus (for to thee I now will speak,
 But in reproachful accents), such protection
 Afford'st thou to the sons of Hercules,
 Who singly warring with the numerous host
 Of Minyæ, caused the Thebans to lift up
 Their free-born eyes undaunted? I on Greece
 No praises can bestow, nor will pass over
 In silence its base treatment of my son,
 For 'twas its duty in these children's cause,
 Bearing flames, pointed spears, and glittering mail,
 To have marched forth, and recompensed the toils
 Of their great father, who hath purged the sea
 And land from all its monsters. Such protection
 Nor doth the Theban city, O my children,
 Nor Greece afford you ; but ye now look up
 To me a feeble friend who can do nought,
 But plead for you with unavailing words.
 For all the vigour which I once possessed
 Hath now deserted me ; old age assails
 My trembling limbs and this decrepit frame.
 Were I again endued with youthful strength,
 I would snatch up my javelin, and defile
 With gore the yellow ringlets on the head
 Of that oppressor, whom his fear should drive
 Beyond the most remote Atlantic bounds.

CHOR. Are there not causes such as may provoke
 Those who are virtuous to express their thoughts,
 Though destitute of eloquence?

LYC. 'Gainst me
 Speak what thou wilt, for thou art armed with words,
 But for injurious language by my deeds
 Will I requite thee. Go, send woodmen, some
 To Helicon, some to Parnassus' vale,
 Bid them fell knotted oaks, and having borne them
 Into the city, heap their ponderous trunks
 Around the altar, and with kindled flames
 Consume the bodies of this hated race ;
 So shall they learn that Creon the deceased
 No longer is the ruler of this land,
 But that I wield the sceptre. As for you
 Who thwart my counsels, O ye aged men,
 Not for the sons of Hercules alone
 Shall ye lament, but for those evil fortunes
 Which ye and your own house are doomed to suffer :
 But this shall ye remember, that to me,
 Your monarch, ye are slaves.

CHOR. O ye the race

Of earth, whom Mars erst sowed, when he had torn
 From the huge dragon's jaws th' envenomed teeth,
 With those right hands why will ye not uplift
 The staves on which ye lean, and with his gore
 Defile the head of this unrighteous man,
 Not born at Thebes, but in a foreign realm,
 From inconsiderate youths who gains that homage
 Which he deserves not? but in evil hour
 O'er me shalt thou bear rule, nor shall my wealth
 Acquired by many toils be ever thine :
 Go, act the tyrant in Eubœa's land,
 From whence thou hither cam'st : for while I live, .
 The sons of Hercules thou ne'er shalt slay,
 Nor is their mighty father plunged so deep
 Beneath earth's surface, that he cannot hear
 His children's outcries. Thou to whom this land
 Owes its destruction dost possess the throne :
 But he its benefactor is deprived
 Of the rewards he merits. Me thou deem'st
 Officious, for protecting those I love
 E'en in the grave, where friends are needed most.
 O my right arm, how dost thou wish to wield
 The spear, but through enfeebling age hast lost
 Thy vigour : else would I have quelled thy pride
 Who dar'st to call me slave, and in this Thebes,
 Where thou exult'st, with glory dwelt. A city
 Diseased through mutiny and evil counsels
 Is void of wisdom, or would ne'er have chosen
 Thee for its lord.

MEG. Ye veterans, I applaud
 Your zeal ; for indignation at the wrongs
 His friends endure becomes the virtuous friend.
 But let not anger 'gainst your lord expose you
 To suffer in our cause. My judgment hear,
 Amphitryon, if to thee in aught I seem
 To speak discreetly. I these children love
 (And how can I help loving those I bore?)
 For whom I have endured the painful throes
 Of childbirth. And to die is what I think of
 As of a thing most dreadful ; but the man
 Who with necessity contends I hold
 An idiot. But let us, since die we must,
 Not perish in the flames to furnish scope
 Of laughter to our foes, which I esteem
 An ill beyond e'en death : for much is due
 To the unsullied honour of our house,
 For thee who erst in arms hast gained renown,
 To die with cowardice, were a reproach
 Not to be borne. My lord, though I forbear

To dwell on his just praises, is so noble,
 He would not wish these children saved, to bear
 The imputation of an evil name :
 For through the conduct of degenerate sons
 Reproach oft falls on their illustrious sires ;
 And the examples which my husband gave me,
 I ought not to reject. But view what grounds
 Thou hast for hope, that I of these may form
 A proper estimate. Dost thou expect
 Thy son to issue from the realms beneath ?
 What chief deceased from Pluto's loathed abode
 Did e'er return ? Can we by gentle words
 Appease this tyrant ? No : we ought to fly
 From fools who are our foes : but to the wise
 And generous yield ; for we with greater ease
 May make a friend of him in whom we find
 A sense of virtuous shame. But to my soul
 This thought occurs, that we, the children's sentence,
 By our entreaties, haply might obtain
 Converted into exile : yet this too
 Is wretched, at th' expense of piteous need
 To compass our deliverance. For their friends
 Avoid the face of guests like these, and look
 No longer kindly on the banished man
 After one day is over. Rouse thy courage,
 And bleed with us, thee too, since death awaits.
 By thy great soul, O veteran, I conjure thee.
 Although the man who labours to repel
 Evils inflicted by Heaven's wrath, is brave,
 Yet doth such courage border upon frenzy :
 For what the fates ordain, no god can frustrate.

CHOR. While yet these arms retained their youthful strength,
 Had any one insulted thee, with ease
 Could I have quelled him ; but I now am nothing :
 On thee, Amphityron, therefore 'tis incumbent
 To think how best thou may'st henceforth ward off
 Th' assaults of fortune.

AMP. No unmanly fear,
 No wish to lengthen out this life, prevents
 My voluntary death : but I would save
 The children of my son, though I appear
 To grasp at things impossible. Behold
 I bear my bosom to the sword ; pierce, slay,
 Or cast me from the rock. But I, O king,
 For this one favour sue to you ; despatch
 Me and this hapless dame before the children,
 Lest them we view, most execrable sight,
 In death's convulsive pangs, to her who bore them,
 And me their grandsire, shrieking out for aid.

But as for all beside, do what you list,
For we have now no bulwark which from death
Can save us.

MEG. I entreat one favour more,
Which to us both will equally be grateful.
Permit me in funereal robes to dress
My children ; for that purpose be the gates
Thrown open (for the palace now is closed
Against us) that they from their father's house
This small advantage may obtain.

LYC. Your wishes
Shall be complied with. I my servants bid
Unbar the gates. Go in, bedeck yourselves ;
The costly robes I grudge not : but no sooner
Shall ye have put them on, than I to you
Will come, and plunge you in the shades beneath.

[Exit LYCUS.]

MEG. Follow your hapless mother, O my children,
To your paternal house, where, though our wealth
Be in the hands of others, our great name
We still preserve.

AMP. O Jove, 'twas then in vain
That thou didst deign to share my nuptial couch,
In vain too, of thy son have I been styled
The father, for thou hast not proved the friend
Thou didst appear to be. I, though a man,
Exceed in virtue thee a mighty god ;
Because I to their foes have not betrayed
The sons of Hercules : but thou, by stealth,
Entering my chamber, to another's wife
Without permission cam'st ; yet know'st not how
To save thy friends ; thou surely art a god
Either devoid of wisdom, or unjust.

[Exeunt AMPHITRYON and MEGARA.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

For Linus' death, by all the tuneful Nine
Bewailed, doth Phœbus' self complain,
And loudly uttering his auspicious strain,
Smite with a golden quill the lyre ; but mine
Shall be the task, while songs of praise
I chaunt and twine the laureate wreath,
His matchless fortitude t' emblaze,
Who sought hell's inmost gloom, the dreary shades beneath ;

Whether I call the hero son of Jove,
 Or of Amphitryon ; for the fame
 To which his labours have so just a claim,
 Must e'en in death attract the public love :
 In the Nemæan forest first he slew
 That lion huge, whose tawny hide
 And grinning jaws extended wide,
 He o'er his shoulders threw.

I. 2.

The winged arrows whizzing from his bow,
 Did on their native hills confound
 The Centaurs' race with many a deadly wound :
 Alcides' matchless strength doth Peneus know,
 Distinguished by his limpid waves,
 The fields laid waste of wide extent,
 With Pelion, and the neighbouring caves
 Of Homoles, uprooting from whose steep ascent,
 Tall pines that cast a venerable shade,
 The monsters armed their forceful hands,
 And strode terrific o'er Thessalia's lands :
 Then breathless on th' ensanguined plain he laid
 That hind distinguished by her golden horns,
 And still in Dian's temple seen
 His prize, to glad the huntress queen,
 Oenœ's walls adorns.

II. 1.

The chariot with triumphal ensigns graced
 Ascending, to his stronger yoke
 He Diomedes' furious coursers broke,
 Scorning the bit, in hateful stalls who placed
 By their fell lord, the flesh of man
 Raging devoured, accursed food ;
 A stream from their foul mangers ran,
 Filled with unholy gore, and many a gobbet crude.
 O'er Hebrus' silver tide at the command
 Of Argos' unrelenting king
 Eurystheus, he these captive steeds did bring,
 Close to Anauros' mouth on Pelion's strand.
 Inhuman Cynus, son of Mars, next felt
 The force of his resounding bow,
 Unsocial wretch, the stranger's foe,
 Who in Amphanea dwelt.

II. 2.

Then came he to th' harmonious nymphs, that band
 Who in Hesperian gardens hold
 Their station, where the vegetative gold
 Glows in the fruitage ; with resistless hand

To snatch the apple from its height;
 The dragon wreathed his folds around
 The tree's huge trunk, portentous sight,
 In vain; that monster fell transfixed with many a wound.
 Into those straits of the unfathomed main
 He entered, with auspicious gales,
 Where feared the mariner 't' unfurl his sails,
 And fixing limits to the watery plain
 His columns reared: then from the heavens' huge load
 The wearied Atlas he relieved,
 His arm the starry realms upheaved,
 And propped the gods' abode.

III. 1.

Foe to the Amazons' equestrian race
 He crossed the boisterous Euxine tide,
 And gave them battle by Mæotis' side.
 What friends through Greece collected he to face
 Hippolita, th' intrepid maid,
 That he the belt of Mars might gain,
 And tissued robe with golden braid.
 Still doth exulting Greece the virgin's spoils retain,
 Lodged in Mycene's shrine, with gore imbrued,
 The dog of Lerna's marshy plain,
 Who unresisting multitudes had slain,
 The hundred-headed hydra, he subdued,
 Aided by fire, and winged shafts combined,
 These from his well-stored quiver flew,
 And triple-formed Geryon slew,
 Fierce Erythræa's hind.

III. 2.

But having finished each adventurous strife,
 At length in evil hour he steers
 To Pluto's mansion, to the house of tears,
 The goal of labour, there to end his life,
 Thence never, never to return;
 His friends dismayed forsake these gates,
 In hopeless solitude we mourn.
 Hell's stern award is passed, the boat of Charon waits
 To their eternal home his sons to bear,
 Most impious lawless homicide!
 For thee, O Hercules, thee erst his pride,
 Thy sire now looks with impotent despair.
 Had I the strength which I possessed of yore,
 I with my Theban friends, arrayed
 In brazen arms, thy sons would aid:
 But youth's blest days are o'er.

Clad in funereal vestments I behold
 The children of Alcides erst the great,
 With his loved wife and his decrepit sire
 Conducting them. O wretched me ! no longer
 Can I restrain the fountain of these tears
 Which gush incessant from my aged eyes.

MEGARA, AMPHITRYON, CHORUS.

MEG. Come on. What priest, what butcher is at hand
 To slay these wretched children, or transpierce
 My bosom ? Now the victims stand prepared
 For their descent to Pluto's loathed abode.
 By force, my children, are we borne along
 United in th' unseemly bands of death ;
 Decrepit age with helpless infancy
 And intermingled matrons. O dire fate
 Of me and of my sons, whom these sad eyes
 Shall never more behold ! Alas ! I bore,
 I nurtured you, to be the scorn, the sport,
 Of our inveterate foes, and by their hands
 To perish. Each fond hope, which from the words
 Of your departed father erst I formed,
 Hath proved fallacious. The deceased to *thee*
 Allotted Argos, in Eurystheus' palace
 Wert *thou* to dwell a mighty king, and wield
 The sceptre of Pelasgia's fruitful land,
 Then with the lion's hide himself had worn
 Thy front he covered : *you* were to ascend
 The throne of Thebes for brazen chariots famed,
 Possessing my hereditary fields,
 Such were the hopes of your exulting sire,
 Who to *your* hand consigned that ponderous mace
 Deceitful gift of Dædalus : on *thee*,
 Thou little one, he promised to bestow
 Oecalia, which his shafts had erst laid waste :
 To you all three, these realms in threefold portions
 Did he distribute ; for your father's views
 Were all magnanimous : but I marked out
 Selected consorts for you, and formed schemes
 Of new affinities, from the domains
 Of Athens, Sparta, and the Theban city ;
 That binding up your cables, and secure
 From the tempestuous deep, ye might enjoy
 A happy life : these prospects now are vanished :
 For to your arms hath changeful Fortune given
 The Destinies to be your brides, while tears
 Are your unhappy mother's lustral drops.
 Your grandsire celebrates the nuptial feast,

O'er which he summons Pluto to preside,
 The father of your consorts. But, alas !
 Whom first of you my children, or whom last
 To this fond bosom shall I clasp, on whom
 Bestow a kiss, whom in my arms sustain ?
 How like the bee with variegated wings
 Shall I collect the sorrows of you all,
 And blend the whole together in a flood
 Of tears exhaustless ? O my dearest lord,
 If any of those spirits who reside
 In Pluto's realms beneath, can hear the voice
 Of mortals, in these words to thee I speak :
 O Hercules, thy father and thy sons
 Are doomed to bleed ; I perish too who erst
 On thy account was by the world called happy.
 Protect us, come, and to these eyes appear,
 Though but a ghost ; thy presence will suffice :
 For these thy children's murderers, when with thee
 Compared, are dastards.

AMP. To appease the powers
 Of hell beneath, O woman, be thy care.
 But lifting to the skies my suppliant hands,
 I call on thee, O Jove, that, if thou mean
 To be a friend to these deserted children,
 Thou interpose without delay and save them,
 For soon 'twill be no longer in thy power :
 Thou oft hast been invoked ; but all my prayers
 Are ineffectual ; die, it seems, we must.
 But, O ye aged men, the bliss which life
 Can yield is small, contrive then how to pass
 As sweetly as is possible the hours
 Which fate allots you, e'en from morn till night
 Shaking off every grief : for Time preserves not
 Our hopes entire, but on his own pursuits
 Intent, deserts us, borne on rapid wings.
 Look but on me, amid the sons of men
 Conspicuous erst performing glorious deeds ;
 And yet hath Fortune in one single day
 Taken all from me, like a feather wafted
 Into the trackless air. I know not him
 To whom collected stores of wealth or fame
 Are durable. Farewell, for this, my comrades,
 Is the last time ye shall behold your friend.

HERCULES, MEGARA, AMPHITRYON, CHORUS.

MEG. Ha ! O thou aged man, do I behold
 My dearest husband ? How shall I find utterance ?

AMP. I know not, O my daughter ; for I too
Am with amazement seized.

MEG. This sure is he
 Who as we heard was in the realms beneath ;
 Else doth some vision in the noontide glare
 Delude our senses. But what frantic words
 Were those I spoke as if 'twas all a dream ?
 This is no other than thy real son,
 Thou aged man. Come hither, O my children,
 Cling to your father's robe, with speed advance,
 Quit not your hold, for ye in him shall find
 An equal to our great protector Jove.

HER. All hail, thou mansion, and thou vestibule
 Of my abode ; thee with what joy once more
 Do I behold, revisiting the light.
 Ha ! what hath happened ? I my children see
 With garlands on their temples, and my wife
 Amidst a throng of men, my father too
 Weeping for some mischance. I'll go to them,
 And ask the cause. What recent ill, O woman,
 Hath happened to this house ?

MEG. My dearest lord,
 O thou who to thy aged father com'st
 A radiant light, in safety hast thou reached,
 At this important crisis, the abodes
 Of those thou lov'st.

HER. What mean you by these words ?
 What tumults, O my sire, are we involved in ?

MEG. We are undone ; but, O thou aged man,
 Forgive, if I've anticipated that
 Thou would'st have said to him : for in some points
 Our sex are greater objects of compassion
 Than males. I deem my children dead ; I too
 Am perishing.

HER. O Phœbus ! with what preludes
 Do you begin your speech ?

MEG. My valiant brothers,
 And aged sire, alas ! are now no more.

HER. Who slew them, how, or with what weapon ?

MEG. The monarch of this city, was their murderer.
 Lycus,

HER. With arms did he oppose them, or prevail,
 When foul sedition through the land diffused
 Its pestilent contagion ?

MEG. By revolt
 He holds the sceptre of the Theban realm.

HER. But wherefore hath this sudden panic reached
 You and my aged sire ?

MEG. He would have slain
 Thy father, me, and these defenceless children.

HER. What mean you ? could he fear my orphan race ?

MEG. Lest they hereafter might avenge the death
Of Creon.

HER. But what garb is this they wear,
Which suits some corse?

MEG. Already in these vestments
For our funereal rites are we arrayed.

HER. And were ye on the point of perishing
By violence? Ah me!

MEG. Our friends desert us;
For we have heard that thou wert dead.

HER. Whence rose
This comfortless depression of the soul?

MEG. Eurystheus' heralds the sad tidings bore.

HER. But for what cause did ye forsake my house,
My sacred Lares?

MEG. From his bed thy sire
Was forcibly dragged forth.

HER. So void of shame
Was Lycus as to treat his age with scorn?

MEG. Shame dwells not near the shrine of brutal force.

HER. Were we thus destitute of friends when absent?

MEG. What friends abide with him who is unhappy?

HER. But did they scorn the battles which I fought
Against the Minyans?

MEG. I to thee repeat it,
Calamity is friendless and forlorn.

HER. Will ye not cast from your dishevelled hair
These wreaths of Pluto? will ye not look up
To yon bright sun, and ope your eyes to view
Scenes far more pleasing than the loathsome shades
Of hell beneath? But I, for wrongs like these
Demand my vengeful arm, with speed will go
And overturn the house of that new king,
His impious head I to the ravenous hounds
Lopped from his trunk will cast, and each base Theban
Who with ingratitude repays my kindness
With this victorious weapon smite: my shafts
The rest shall scatter, till Ismenos' channel
Be choked up with the corpses of the slain,
And Dirce's limpid fountain stream with gore.
For whom, in preference to my wife, my children,
And aged father, shall I aid? Farewell,
Ye labours which unwittingly I strove
T' accomplish, mindless of these dearest pledges;
In their defence I equally am bound
To yield up life, if for their father they
Were doomed to bleed. What! shall we call it noble
To war against the hydra or the lion,
And execute the mandates of Eurystheus,

If I avert not my own children's death?
No longer else shall I, as erst, be styled
Alcides the victorious.

CHOR. It is just
Parents should aid their sons, their aged sire,
And the dear partner of the nuptial bed.

AMP. My son, this mighty privilege is yours,
To be the best of friends to those you love,
And a determined foe to those you hate.
But be not too impetuous.

HER. In what instance
Have I been hastier, O my honoured sire,
Than it becomes me?

AMP. To support his cause,
The king hath many, who in fact are poor,
Though fame accounts them rich; they raised a tumult,
And caused the ruin of the state, to plunder
Their neighbours; for the fortunes they possessed
Are through their own extravagance and sloth
Reduced to nothing. As the gates you entered,
These could not fail to see you: O beware
Lest since you by your foes have been perceived,
You perish when you least foresee your danger,
Oppressed by numbers.

HER. Though all Thebes beheld me,
I care not. But when I descried a bird
Of evil omen perched aloof, I knew
That there had some calamity befallen
My house, and therefore with presaging soul
In secrecy I entered these domains.

AMP. Draw near with pious awe, my son, salute
The Lares, and display that welcome face
In your paternal mansions. For to drag
Your wife and children forth, with me your sire
To murder us, the king himself will come.
But all will prosper, if you here remain,
And a secure asylum will you find,
Nor through the city spread a loud alarm
Ere your designs succeed.

HER. Thus will I act,
For thou hast rightly spoken; I am entering
The palace. From the sunless caves beneath
Of Proserpine, after a long delay
Returning, first to our domestic gods
Will I be mindful to address my vows.

AMP. Have you indeed then visited the house
Of Pluto, O my son?

HER. And thence the dog
With triple-head brought to these realms of light.

AMP. Conquered in battle, or on you bestowed
By hell's indulgent goddess?

HER. I prevailed
O'er him in combat, and have been so happy
As to behold the far-famed mystic orgies.

AMP. But is the beast lodged in Eurystheus' palace?

HER. Him Cthonia's groves and Hermion's walls
confine.

AMP. Knows not Eurystheus that you are returned
Into this upper world?

HER. He doth not know :
For I came first to learn what passes here.

AMP. But wherefore in the realms beneath, so long
Did you remain?

HER. I there prolonged may stay,
My sire, to bring back Theseus from the shades.

AMP. And where is he, gone to his native land?

HER. He went to Athens, pleased with his escape

From the infernal regions. But attend
Your father to the palace, O my sons,
Which now ye enter in a happier state
Than when ye left it : but take courage, cease
To pour forth floods of tears ; and, O my wife,
Collect thyself, let all thy terrors cease,
And loose my garments ; for I have not wings,
Nor would I vanish from my friends. Alas !
Their hold they quit not, but cling faster still,
And faster to my vest. Because ye stand

Upon the verge of ruin, I will take
And bear you hence, as by the ship light boats
Are guided o'er the deep : for I refuse not
The care my children claim. Here all mankind
Are on a level, they of nobler rank
And mean condition, to their progeny
Bear equal love. The gifts of fortune vary,
Some have abundant wealth, and some are poor ;
But the whole human race feels this attachment.

[*Exeunt HERCULES and MEGARA, with the children.*]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Youth is light, and free from care
But now a burden on my head
Heavier than Ætna's rock, old age, I bear,
Before these eyes its sable veil is spread,

Not for the wealth of Asiatic kings,
 Or heaps of gold that touched yon roof sublime,
 Ere would I barter life's enchanting prime;
 Hence wealth a brighter radiance flings,
 And poverty itself can charm :
 But thou, curst dotage, art the sum
 Of every fancied, every real harm ;
 May'st thou be plunged beneath the deep, nor come
 To peopled town, or civilized abode,
 Go wing thy distant flight along th' aerial road.

I. 2.

Did the gods with sapient care
 Mete out their bounty to mankind,
 The good, the gift of twofold youth should share
 Unquestioned token of a virtuous mind,
 Behold life's son its blest career renew,
 While the degenerate sleep to wake no more.
 We by these means distinctly might explore
 Their merits with as clear a view,
 As sailors, who each starry spark
 Enumerate that adorns the skies.
 But now the gods have by no certain mark
 Directed whom we for their worth should prize,
 Whom shun as wicked : uninformed we live,
 Revolving time hath nought but plenteous wealth to give.

II. I.

Mindful of its ancient themes,
 This faltering tongue shall ne'er refuse,
 Oft as I wander by their haunted streams,
 To blend each gentle grace and tuneful muse :
 O may I dwell among the harmonious choirs,
 My brows still circled with a laureate wreath !
 Still shall the bard, a hoary veteran, breathe
 The strains Mnemosuné inspires :
 While memory wakes, I ne'er will cease
 Th' exploits of Hercules to sing ;
 Where Bromius yields the purple vine's increase,
 Where Libyan pipes and the lute's sevenfold string
 Are heard in dulcet unison ; to praise
 The Nine who aid the dance, I'll wake my choral lays.

II. 2.

Delian virgins at the gate
 Assembled, festive pæans sing,
 The triumphs of Latona's son relate,
 And nimbly vaulting form their beauteous ring.

Into thy temple, by devotion led,
 O Phœbus, will I raise my parting breath ;
 The swan thus warbles at the hour of death :
 Though hoary hairs my cheeks o'erspread.
 How great the hero's generous love,
 Whose merits aid our votive song,
 Alcides the resistless son of Jove ;
 Those trophies, which to noble birth belong
 By him are all surpassed, his forceful hand
 Restoring peace, hath cleansed this monster-teeming land.

LYCUS, AMPHITRYON, CHORUS.

LYC. Forth from the portals at due season comes
 Amphitryon ; for 'tis long since ye were decked
 In robes and trappings such as suit the dead.
 But go, command the children and the wife
 Of Hercules without these gates t' appear,
 Because ye have engaged that ye will die
 By your own hands.

AMP. You persecute, O king,
 Me whom already fortune hath made wretched,
 And with sharp taunts insult my dying race :
 Although in power supreme, you ought to act
 With moderation ; but since you impose
 This harsh necessity, we must submit,
 And execute your will.

LYC. Where's Megara ?
 Where are the children of Alcmena's son ?

AMP. To me she seems, as far as I can guess,
 From looking through the door——

LYC. What grounds hast thou
 For this opinion ?

AMP. In a suppliant posture
 To sit before the Lares.

LYC. And implore them
 With unavailing plaints to save her life.

AMP. In vain too calls she on her lord deceased.

LYC. But he is absent, he can ne'er return.

AMP. Unless some god should raise him up again.

LYC. Go thou, and from the palace lead her hither.

AMP. 'Twould make me an accomplice in the murder,
 If this I acted.

LYC. Since thy soul recoils,
 I, whom such idle scruples cannot move,
 Will with their mother bring the children forth.
 Follow my steps, my servants, that at length
 We may behold sweet peace succeed our toils.

[Exit LYCUS.]

AMP. Depart : for to that place the Fates ordain
 You now are on the road ; perhaps the sequel
 Will be another's province : but expect,
 Since you have done amiss, to suffer vengeance.
 He, O ye veterans, at a lucky hour
 Enters the palace, for on ambushed swords
 His feet will stumble, while the villain hopes
 Those he would murder are too near at hand
 To 'scape : but I will go to see him fall
 A breathless corse : for when our foe endures
 The just requital of his impious deeds,
 There is a joy resulting from his death.

[Exit AMPHITRYON.]

CHOR. Changed are our evil fortunes. To the shades
 He who was erst a mighty king descends.
 O justice, and ye dread vicissitudes
 Of fate, ordained by Heaven !

1st SEMICHOR. Thou art at length
 Gone thither, where by death thou for those taunts,
 With which thou o'er the virtuous didst exult,
 Shalt make atonement.

2nd SEMICHOR. My delight bursts forth
 In floods of tears : for now is come that day
 The tyrant deemed would never visit him.

1st SEMICHOR. But let us also look into the palace,
 My aged friend, and mark if yonder miscreant
 Be punished as I wish.

LYC. [within.] Ah me ! ah me !

CHOR. That melody most grateful to mine ear
 Beneath yon roofs commences ; nor is death
 Far distant ; for these cries the monarch utters
 Are but a prelude to the fatal stroke.

LYC. [within.] Ye realms of Cadmus, I through treachery
 perish !

2nd SEMICHOR. Others have perished by that bloody
 hand.
 Since then the retribution thou endure'st
 Is just, endure it bravely.

1st SEMICHOR. Where is he
 Who uttered 'gainst the blest immortal powers
 His foolish blasphemies, and called the gods
 Too weak to punish him ?

2nd SEMICHOR. That impious man
 Is now no more. Yon vaulted roofs are silent,
 Let us begin the harmonious choral lay ;
 For, as I wished, our comrades prove victorious.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

The sumptuous banquet, with th' enlivening dance
 Now every Theban shall employ ;
 Dried are our tears, and past mischance
 Yields to the lyre abundant themes of joy :
 Stretched low in dust the tyrant lies ;
 But he, who by an ancient right
 Obtains the sceptre, is our king ;
 From Acheron's loathed stream behold him rise,
 Revisiting the cheerful realms of light,
 And hope, unlooked for, doth fresh transports bring.

I. 2.

The gods take cognizance of broken trust,
 Nor are they deaf to holy prayer.
 On gold and fortune, power unjust
 Attends ; man's reason is too weak to bear
 The joint temptations. Heaven at length,
 Whose kind protection we invoke,
 Deigning with pity to behold
 Our woes, to the neglected laws their strength
 Restoring, with vindictive fury broke
 The sable car which bore the god of gold.

II. 1.

Now let the flowery wreath, the victor's pride,
 Adorn Ismenos ; let each street employ
 The hours in dance and social joy ;
 Let Dirce from the silver wave arise,
 And old Asopus' daughters by her side,
 Forsaking their paternal stream,
 Conspire to aid our rapturous theme,
 And for Alcides claim the victor's prize.
 Ye Pythian rocks, with waving forests crowned,
 And seats of Helicon's melodious choir,
 Come every nymph, with cheerful sound,
 Visit these walls which to the clouds aspire ;
 In helmed crop here warriors filled the plains.
 Whose lineage undecayed from age to age remains.

II. 2.

O ye, the partners of one nuptial bed,
 Happy Amphitryon, sprung from mortal race,
 And Jove, who rushed to the embrace

Of bright Alcmena ; for of thee aright,
 Though erst, O Jove, I doubted, was it said
 Thou didst enjoy that beauteous dame ;
 With the renown his triumphs claim,
 Time through the world displays Alcides' might,
 Emerged from grisly Pluto's realms abhorred,
 Who quits the darksome caverns of the earth,
 To me a far more welcome lord,
 Than yon vile tyrant of ignoble birth.
 Now to the bloody strife we lift our eyes ;
 The vengeful sword is bared, if Justice haunt the skies.
 SEMICHOR. Ha ! are we all by the same panic seized ?
 My aged friends, what spectre, hovering o'er
 The palace, do I see ? Those tardy feet
 Raise from the ground, precipitate thy flight,
 Be gone.—From me, O Pæan, mighty king,
 Avert these evils.

IRIS, A FIEND, CHORUS.

IRIS. O, ye aged men,
 Be not dismayed : the fiend whom ye behold
 Is daughter of old Night, and I am Iris,
 The gods' ambassadress. We are not come
 To harm your city ; for we only war
 Against one man, who, sprung 'tis said from Jove
 And from Alcmena : till he had performed
 Severest labours, fate preserved his life ;
 Nor did his father Jove permit, or me,
 Or Juno, e'er to hurt him : but, each toil
 Eurystheus' hate enjoined, now he hath finished,
 Those oft-polluted hands with recent gore
 Will Juno stain, by urging him to slay
 His children : in this scheme I too conspire.
 Come on then, armed with a relentless heart,
 Unwedded daughter of the pitchy Night ;
 Instil into that hero's breast such frenzy
 As shall o'erturn his reason, and constrain him
 To perpetrate this murder ; his wild steps
 Goad onward, throw the bloody cable forth,
 That having sent this band of graceful sons,
 Slain by their father's arm, adown the gulf
 Of Acheron, th' effects of Juno's wrath
 And mine, he may experience ; for the gods
 Would be mere things of no account, but great
 Would be the power of man, if he escaped
 Unpunished.

FIEND. I from noble parents spring,
 Night is my mother ; and that blood which streamed
 From the foul wound of Ouranus, my sire :

CHOR. Thou city, groan ; thy choicest flower,
The son of Jove, is cropped : O Greece,
Thy benefactor's fatal hour
Impends. To thee for ever lost,
Assailed by that infernal pest,
The dauntless chief, deprived of peace,
Shall feel his agonizing breast
With horrible distraction tossed.
Hence in her brazen chariot went
The raging fiend, on mischief bent ;
She urges with a scorpion goad
Her steeds along th' ethereal road.
That hundred-headed child of Night,
With all those hissing snakes around,
From her envenomed eyeballs bright
The Gorgon thus directs the wound.
Soon changed by Heaven's supreme decree,
Is man's short-lived felicity.
Ye infants, soon shall ye expire,
Slain by your own distracted sire.
Ah me ! thy son, without delay,
Shall be left childless, mighty Jove ;
For on his tortured soul shall prey
Yon fiend, and by the powers above
Vengeance commissioned to destroy.
O mansion erst the scene of joy !
To form a prelude to this dance,
Neither the cheering timbrel's sound,
Nor sportive Menades advance ;
Here human gore shall stream around,
Instead of that refreshing juice,
Which Bacchus' purple grapes produce.
Away, ye children, danger's nigh,
For he who wakes this hostile strain,
Traces your footsteps as ye fly ;
Nor will the fiend with fruitless rage,
A war beneath those mansions wage.
Alas ! we sink o'erwhelmed with woe,
My tears shall never cease to flow.
I wail the grandsire hoar with age,
The mother too who bore that train
Of lovely children, but in vain.
Lo, what a tempest shakes the wall,
And makes th' uprooted mansion fall !
What mean'st thou, frantic son of Jove ?
The hellish uproar thou dost raise,
Filling the palace with amaze,
Is such as vexed the realms above,

Transfixed his liver with a deadly shaft ;
 Supine he fell, and with his streaming gore
 Distained the sculptured pillars, at whose base
 He breathed his last. But, with a shout, Alcides
 Uttered these boasts : " One of Eurystheus' brood
 Slain by this arm, for the inveterate hate
 His father bore me, to atone, here lies
 A breathless corse." Against another then,
 Who to the basis of the altar fled,
 And hoped to 'scape unseen, he bent his bow ;
 But ere he gave the wound, the wretched youth
 Fell at his father's knees, stretched forth his hands
 To touch his chin, or twine around his neck,
 And cried : " O spare my life, my dearest sire,
 Yours, I am yours indeed ; nor will you slay
 Eurystheus' son." But he with glaring eyes
 Looked like a Gorgon, while the boy pressed on
 So close, he had no scope to aim the shaft,
 But as the smith the glowing anvil smites,
 Full on his auburn tresses he discharged
 The ponderous mace, the crashing bones gave way.
 Scarce had he slain the second, when he ran
 To butcher his third son o'er both their corpses :
 But the unhappy mother in her arms
 Caught up, into an inner chamber bore
 The child, and closed the doors : but he, as if
 He had indeed been at the Cyclops' city,
 With levers from their hinges forced them, pierced
 His wife and offspring with a single shaft,
 And then to slay his aged father rushed
 With speed impetuous : but a spectre came,
 Which to our eyes the awful semblance bore
 Of Pallas brandishing her pointed spear,
 And threw a rocky fragment at the breast
 Of Hercules, which checked his murderous frenzy,
 And plunged him into sleep. Upon the ground
 Headlong he fell, where 'midst the ruins lay,
 Rent from its pedestal a broken column :
 But rallying from our flight, we, by his sire
 Assisted, to the pillar bound him fast
 With thongs, that on his wakening from this trance
 He might commit no more atrocious deeds.
 There doth he taste an inauspicious sleep,
 First having slain his children and his consort.
 I know no mortal more completely wretched.

[Exit MESSENGER.]

CHOR. There was a murder in the Argive land
 Most wondrous and unparalleled through Greece
 In days of yore, which the confederate daughters

Of Danaus perpetrated ; but their crimes
 By the dire fate of Progne's only son
 Were far surpassed. I of a bloody deed
 Now speak which they committed, they whose voice
 Equals the Muses' choir ; but thou who spring'st
 From Jove himself, hast in thy frenzy slain
 All thy three sons ; for them what groans, what tears,
 What invocations to the shades beneath,
 Or songs shall I prepare to soothe the rage
 Of grisly Pluto ? Shivered on the ground
 The portals of that lofty mansion view,
 Behold the corpses of the children stretcht
 Before their miserable sire, whose senses,
 Since he hath slain them, in profoundest sleep
 Are buried. Mark those knotty cords around
 The brawny limbs of Hercules, entwined
 And to the columns in the palace fixed.
 But old Amphitryon, like a bird who wails
 Over its callow brood, with tardy step
 Comes hither in the bitterness of grief.

AMPHITRYON, CHORUS.

The Palace gates thrown open, discover HERCULES stretched on the ground and sleeping.

AMP. Ye aged Thebans, will ye not be silent,
 Will ye not suffer him dissolved in sleep
 His miseries to forget ?

CHOR. These tears, these groans,
 To you, O venerable man, I pay,
 To those slain children, and the chief renowned
 For his victorious conflicts.

AMP. Farther still
 Retire ; forbear, forbear those clamorous sounds,
 Lest his repose ye break, and from a trance
 The sleeper rouse.

CHOR. How dreadful was this slaughter !

AMP. Ha ! ha ! begone, for he in wild confusion
 Is starting up. Why will ye not lament,
 Ye aged men, in a more gentle tone ?
 Lest roused from sleep he burst his chains, destroy
 The city, smite his sire, and with the ground
 Lay these proud mansions level.

CHOR. This I hold
 Impossible.

AMP. Be silent, I will mark
 Whether he breathe : O let me place my ear
 Still closer.

CHOR. Sleeps he ?

AMP. An accursed repose,
 Alas ! he tastes, who hath his consort slain,
 And slain his sons with that resounding bow.

CHOR. Now wail.

AMP. I wail those children's fate.

CHOR.

Alas ! old man, our equal pity claims.

Your son,

AMP. Observe strict silence, for again he rises
 And turns around : I will conceal myself
 Beneath that roof.

CHOR. Be of good cheer : night seals
 The eyelids of your son.

AMP. Mark, mark me well,
 I am so wretched that without reluctance
 I can bid life adieu : but if he kill
 Me too who am his father, guilt on guilt
 Shall he accumulate, and join the stings
 Of parricide to those which from the Furies
 Who haunt him, he already doth endure.

CHOR. Better you then had died, when you prepared
 T' avenge the slaughtered brothers of Alcmena,
 And stormed the fortress of the Taphian isle.

AMP. Fly, leave the palace instantly ; avoid
 That frantic man, who from his sleep is roused,
 For adding soon fresh slaughter to the past,
 With Bacchanalian transport shall he range
 Through Cadmus' city.

CHOR. Why hast thou, O Jove,
 Hated thy son so bitterly, and plunged him
 Into this sea of troubles ?

HER. [*waking.*] Ha ! I breathe,
 And view each wonted object, air, and earth,
 And these bright solar beams. Into what storm,
 What dreadful perturbation of the soul
 Have I been plunged ! all heated I transpire,
 Not from my lungs, but from my feverish heart.
 Behold me ! wherefore am I bound with chains,
 Like a disabled ship towed into haven,
 And by this youthful chest and nervous arm
 Joined to a broken pillar ? Here I sit
 Contiguous to the corpses of the slain ;
 My winged shafts lie scattered on the ground,
 With that unerring bow which erst I bore
 In war to guard me, and with care preserved.
 Sent by Eurystheus, am I then arrived
 A second time at the drear shades beneath ?
 Neither the rock of Sisyphus, nor Pluto,
 Nor Ceres' sceptred daughter, do I see.
I sure am stricken senseless with amazement,

And know not where I am. But ho ! what friend
Is near, or at a distance, who will come
To give me information ? For each object
Which I was erst acquainted with seems strange.

AMP. Shall I approach this scene of my afflictions
Ye aged men ?

CHOR. I will attend your steps,
Nor meanly in calamity betray you.

HER. Why dost thou weep, my sire, and veil those
eyes,

Retiring far from thy beloved son ?

AMP. My son—for though unhappy, you are mine.

HER. But what calamity do I endure
That causes thee to shed these tears ?

AMP. Your woes
Are such, that any god, if he endured
The same, would groan.

HER. This hath a dreadful sound :
But you, my fortunes have not yet explained.

AMP. Because if you your senses have recovered,
Yourself behold them.

HER. Tell me what thou mean'st—
If to my charge thou lay'st some recent crime.

AMP. If you no longer to the powers of hell
Are subjected, the truth will I unfold.

HER. Alas ! how darkly thou again allud'st
To what my soul suspects.

AMP. Your looks I watch
To see if reason wholly be restored.

HER. I recollect not that I e'er was frantic.

AMP. [*to the CHORUS.*]
Shall I unbind the shackles of my son,
Or how must we proceed ?

HER. Say who was he
That bound me ? for with scorn have I been treated.

AMP. Thus much of your afflictions may you know :
Forbear all farther questions.

HER. Is thy silence
Sufficient then to teach me what I wish
To learn ?

AMP. O Jove, dost thou behold the curses
Hurl'd on thy son from envious Juno's throne ?

HER. What dire effects of her inveterate rage
Have I endured ?

AMP. Of that vindictive goddess
No longer think : but to your own afflictions
Attend.

HER. Alas ! I utterly am ruined !
What farther ill wouldst thou disclose ?

AMP. See there
The corpses of your murdered children lie.

HER. Alas! what dreadful objects strike these eyes!

AMP. My son, against your progeny you waged
An inauspicious war.

HER. Why talk of war?
Who slew them?

AMP. You, your arrows, and the cause
Of all these mischiefs, that remorseless goddess.

HER. What mean'st thou, or what crime have I committed,
My father, O thou messenger of ill?

AMP. By frenzy urged. But you such questions ask,
As I with grief must answer.

HER. Have I murdered
My consort also?

AMP. All these deeds of horror
That single arm did perpetrate.

HER. Alas!
A cloud of griefs surrounds me.

AMP. For this cause
Your fortunes I lament.

HER. Have I demolished
My own house too, with Bacchanalian rage
Inspired?

AMP. The whole of what I know amounts
To this, that you are most completely wretched.

HER. Where did this fatal madness seize me first?

AMP. As round the altar, you, a flaming brand,
To expiate the foul murder which distains
Your hands, were bearing.

HER. Ah! why lengthen out
A guilty life, when of my dearest children

I am become the murderer? Why delay
To leap from the high rock, or with a sword

Transpierce this bosom, on myself their blood
Avenging? or t' avert that infamy

Which waits me, shall I rush into the flames?
But Theseus comes to bar these desperate counsels,

My kinsman and my friend; in a true light
To him shall I appear, and the pollution

I have incurred by slaying my own sons
Will be conspicuous to my dearest comrade.

What shall I do? or where can I find out
A solitude impervious to my woes?

On rapid wings, O could I mount, or plunge
Into the nether regions of the earth?

Give me a veil to darken o'er my head.

For 'tis with shame I think on the offence
Caused by this deed: but to myself alone

Ascribing the defilement of their blood,
I wish not to contaminate the guiltless.

THESEUS, AMPHITRYON, HERCULES, CHORUS.

THE. An armed squadron of Athenian youths
I hither bring, who near Asopus' stream
Are stationed to assist your son in battle.
For to the city of Erectheus' race
A rumour came, that Lycus, having seized
The sceptre of this land, is waging war
'Gainst you. O aged man, I to repay
The benefits which Hercules conferred
On me, whom from the deary shades beneath
In safety he redeemed, on your behalf
Attend, if of this arm, or of my troops,
Ye need the help. But, ha, what means the floor
With weltering corpses heaped? hath my design
Proved ineffectual? am I then arrived
Too late to remedy the dreadful mischiefs
Which have already ta'en effect? who slew
Those children, or whose consort was the dame
Whom I behold? for where the boys are laid,
No signs appear of any battle fought:
But sure I of some other recent ill
Now make discovery.

AMP. O thou goddess, throned
Upon that hill where verdant olives spring.

THE. Why speak you to me in this piteous tone,
And with such prelude?

AMP. Grievous are the ills
Which we endure through Heaven's severe behest.

THE. What boys are they o'er whose remains you weep?

AMP. Them did my miserable son beget,
And when begotten slay, this impious murder
He dared to perpetrate.

THE. Express yourself
In more auspicious terms.

AMP. I wish t' obey
Th' injunctions thou hast given.

THE. What dreadful words
Are these which you have uttered!

AMP. In a moment
Were we undone.

THE. What mean you, what hath happened?

AMP. This frenzy seized him sprinkled with the venom,
Which from the hundred-headed hydra flowed.

THE. Such Juno's wrath. But who, O aged man,
Stands 'mong the dead?

AMP. My son, my valiant son,
Inured to many toils, who in that war
Where earth's gigantic brood were slain, advanced
Among the gods to the Phlegræan field
Armed with his buckler.

THE. Ah, what mighty chief
Was e'er so wretched?

AMP. Scarcely shalt thou know
A man with greater labours vexed, and doomed
To wander through more regions.

THE. But why veils he
Beneath that robe his miserable head?

AMP. Because thy presence, friendship's sacred ties
Added to those of kindred, and the gore
Of his slain children, fill his soul with shame.

THE. I with his griefs am come to sympathize;
Uncover him.

AMP. That garment from your eyes
Remove, display your visage to the sun.
It ill becomes my dignity to weep:
Yet I a suppliant strive to touch your beard,
Your knees, your hand, and shed these hoary tears.
O curb your soul, my son, whose fierceness equals
That of the lion, else 'twill hurry you
To bloody impious rage, and make you add
Mischiefs to mischiefs.

THE. Ho! on thee I call,
On thee, who to that seat of misery seem'st
Fast riveted; permit thy friends to see
Thy face: for darkness hath no cloud so black
As to conceal thy woes. Why dost thou wave
Thy hand and point to those whom thou hast slain,
Lest by this converse I pollute myself?
I am not loth to share thy woes; I erst
Was happy (which my soul is ever bound
To recollect with gratitude) when thou
From hell's loathed gloom, the mansion of the dead,
Didst safely bear me to the realms of light.
For I abhor th' attachment of those friends
Which time impairs, him too who would enjoy
Their better fortunes, but refuse to sail
In the same bark with those who prove unblest.
Rise up, unveil thy miserable head
And look on me. A noble mind sustains
Without reluctance what the gods inflict.

HER. Did you, O Theseus, see me slay my children?

THE. I heard, and now behold the ills thou speak'st of.

HER. Then why didst thou uncover to the sun
My guilty head?

THE. Why not? canst thou, a man,
Pollute the gods?

HER. Avaunt, O wretch, avaunt,
For I am all contagion.

THE. To a friend
No mischief from his friend can be transmitted.

HER. Your conduct I applaud, nor will deny
That I have served you.

THE. I who erst received
Those favours at thy hands, now pity thee.

HER. I am indeed an object of your pity,
From having slain my sons.

THE. For thee I weep,
Because to me thou heretofore wert kind
When vexed by other ills.

HER. Did you e'er meet
With those who were more wretched?

THE. Thy afflictions
Are of such giant bulk, that they to heaven
Reach from this nether world.

HER. Hence am I ready
For instant death.

THE. Canst thou suppose the gods
Regard thy threats?

HER. Self-willed are they and cruel,
And I defy the gods.

THE. Restrain thy tongue,
Lest thou by uttering such presumptuous words
Increase thy sufferings.

HER. I with woes am fraught
Already, nor remains there space for more.

THE. But what design'st thou? whither art thou borne
With frantic rage?

HER. In death will I return
To those abodes beneath, whence late I came.

THE. Thou speak'st the language of a vulgar man.

HER. Exempt from all calamity yourself,
On me these admonitions you bestow.

THE. Are these fit words for Hercules to use,
Who many toils endured?

HER. I had not suffered
Thus much, if any bounds had circumscribed
My labours.

THE. Benefactor of mankind,
And their great friend?

HER. From them no aid I find;
But Juno triumphs.

THE. Greece will not permit thee
To perish unregarded.

Uttering a voice indignant, will forbid me
 To touch its surface, ocean, o'er its waves,
 And every river, o'er its streams, to pass.
 I shall be like Ixion then, with chains
 Fixed to the wheel. 'Twere better that no Greek
 With whom I in my happier days conversed
 Should see me more. What motive can I have
 For living? or to me of what avail
 Were it to keep possession of this useless
 And this unholy being? flushed with joy,
 Let Jove's illustrious consort, in the dance,
 Strike with her sandals the resplendent floor
 Of high Olympus: for she now hath gained
 Her utmost wish, and from his basis torn
 The first of Grecian warriors. Who can pray
 To such a goddess, who, with envy stung,
 Because Jove loved a woman, hath destroyed
 The benefactors of the Grecian realm,
 Those blameless objects of her hate?

THE. This mischief
 Springs from no god except the wife of Jove.
 Well dost thou judge, in saying that 'tis easier
 To give thee wholesome counsel, than endure
 Such agonies. But no man 'scapes unwounded
 By fortune, and no god; unless the songs
 Of ancient bards mislead. Have not the gods
 Among themselves formed lawless marriages?
 Have they not bound in ignominious chains
 Their fathers, to obtain a throne? In heaven
 Yet dwell they, and bear up beneath the load
 Of all their crimes. But what canst thou allege,
 If thou, frail mortal as thou art, those ills
 Immoderately bewail'st to which the gods
 Without reluctance yield? from Thebes retire,
 Since thus the laws ordain; and follow me
 To Pallas' city: when thy hands are there
 Cleansed from pollution, I to thee will give
 A palace, and with thee divide my wealth.
 The presents which the citizens to me
 Appropriated, when twice seven blooming victims
 I by the slaughter of the Cretan bull
 Redeemed, on thee will I bestow. For portions
 Of land are through the realm to me assigned:
 These, while thou liv'st henceforth shall by thy name
 Be called: but after death, when to the shades
 Of Pluto thou descend'st, with sacrifice
 And with the sculptured tomb, shall Athens grace
 Thy memory. For her citizens have gained
 This fairest wreath from every Grecian state,

By yielding succour to the virtuous man
 Their glories are augmented : and to thee
 Will I repay with gratitude the kindness
 Which thou deserv'st for saving me ; for thou
 Hast need of friends at present : but no friend
 Is wanted when the gods confer renown ;
 For, if he wills, Jove's aid is all-sufficient.

HER. You hold a language foreign to my griefs.
 But I suppose not that the gods delight
 In lawless nuptials, that their hands are bound
 With galling chains, nor did I e'er believe,
 Nor can I be convinced, that one bears rule
 Over another. For a deity
 If he be truly such, can stand in need
 Of no support. But by some lying bard
 Those miserable fables were devised.
 Although I am most wretched, yet I thought
 I might be charged with cowardice for leaving
 These realms of light. For he who bears not up
 'Gainst adverse fortune, never can withstand
 The weapon of his foe. I am resolved
 To wait for death with firmness : to your city
 Meantime will I retreat, and am most grateful
 For your unnumbered gifts. Unnumbered labours
 Have I been erst acquainted with ; from none
 Did I e'er shrink, these eyes did never stream
 With tears, nor thought I that I e'er should come
 To such a pitch of meanness as to weep :
 But now, it seems, must Fortune be obeyed.
 I am content. Thou, O my aged sire,
 Behold'st my exile, thou in me behold'st
 The murderer of my children : to the tomb
 Consign their corse with funereal pomp,
 And o'er them shed the tributary tear :
 For me the laws allow not to perform
 This office. Let their mother, e'en in death,
 Clasp to her breast, and in her arms sustain,
 Our wretched offspring, whom in evil hour
 I slew reluctant. But when thou with earth
 Hast covered them, thy residence still keep
 Here in this city, miserably indeed,
 Yet on thy soul lay this constraint, to bear
 With me the woes which I most deeply feel.
 The very sire, ye children, who begot,
 Murdered you ; no advantage ye derive
 From what this arm by all my labours gained,
 And from your father's triumphs no renown.
 Have not I slain thee too who didst preserve
 My bed inviolate, and o'er my house
 Long watch with patient care ? Ah me ! my wife,

My sons : but how much more to be lamented
 Am I myself, from them for ever torn ?
 Ye melancholy joys of kisses lavished
 On their remains, and ye my loathed companions,
 The weapons which I still retain, but doubt
 Whether to keep or dash them to the ground ;
 For they, while at my side they hang, will seem
 To utter these reproachful words : " With us
 Thy consort and thy children hast thou slain,
 Yet thou the very instruments preserv'st
 Which were their murderers." After such a charge
 Can I still bear them ? what can I allege ?
 But stripping off those arms with which through Greece
 I have achieved full many glorious deeds,
 Shall I expose myself to those who hate me,
 And die ignobly ? I must not abandon
 But keep them still, though sorrowing. Aid me, Theseus,
 In this one enterprise ; to Argos go
 And for your friend obtain the great reward
 Promised for dragging from the shades of hell
 That execrable hound : lest if by you
 Deserted, I through grief for my slain children
 Should come to some calamitous end. Thou realm
 Of Cadmus, and ye citizens of Thebes,
 With tresses shorn, in concert weep ; the tomb
 Of my slain children visit, there bewail,
 In one funereal dirge, the dead, and me ;
 For smitten with the same dire scourge of fate
 By Juno, we all perish.

THE. Hapless man,
 Arise ; enough of tears.

HER. I cannot rise,
 These limbs are now grown stiff.

THE. Calamity
 Subdues the valiant.

HER. Would I were a stone,
 Insensible to sufferings !

THE. Cease these plaints ;
 And to the friend who comes to serve thee, give
 Thy hand.

HER. But let me not wipe off the blood
 Upon your garments.

THE. Wipe it off, nor scruple,
 For I object not.

HER. Of my sons bereft,
 In you the likeness of a son I find.

THE. Fling round my neck thine arm : I'll lead the way.

HER. A pair of friends : though one of us be wretched.
 Such, O my aged father, is the man
 We ought to make a friend.

THE. His native realm
Produces an illustrious progeny.

HER. Turn me around, that I may see my sons.

THE. Hoping such philtre may thy griefs appease.

HER. This earnestly I wish for, and would clasp
My father to this bosom.

AMP. Here, lo, here !

For what my son desires, to me is grateful.

THE. Of all the labours thou didst erst achieve,
Hast thou thus lost the memory ?

HER. All those ills
Were less severe than what I now experience.

THE. Should any one behold thee grown unmanly,
He could not praise thee.

HER. Though to you I seem
Degraded to an abject life, I trust
That I my former courage shall resume.

THE. Where now is the illustrious Hercules ?

HER. What had you been, if still you in the shades
Had miserably dwelt ?

THE. Then sunk my courage
Beneath the meanest of the human race.

HER. Why then persist in saying that my woes
Have quite subdued me ?

THE. Onward !

HER. Good old man,
Farewell.

AMP. Farewell too, O my son.

HER. My children
Inter as I directed.

AMP. O, my son,
But who will bury me ?

HER. I.

AMP. When will you
Come hither ?

HER. After thou hast for my children
Performed that pious office.

AMP. How ?

HER. I'll fetch thee
From Thebes to Athens.—Bear into the palace
My children's corpses which pollute the ground.
But as for me, who have disgraced and plunged
My house in ruin, I will follow Theseus,
Towed like a battered skiff. Whoe'er prefers
Wealth or dominion to a steadfast friend,
Judges amiss.

CHOR. Most wretched, drowned in tears,
Reft of our great protector, we depart.

THE CHILDREN OF HERCULES.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

IOLAUS.
COPREUS.
CHORUS OF ATHENIAN
OLD MEN.

DEMOPHOON.
MACARIA.
ALCMENA.
MESSENGER.

EURYSTHEUS.

SCENE.—BEFORE THE ALTAR OF JUPITER, IN THE FORUM AT
MARATHON, A CITY IN THE ATHENIAN DOMINIONS.

IOLAUS.

LONG have I held this sentiment : the just
Are born the streams of bounty to diffuse
On all around them ; while the man whose soul
Is warped by interest, useless in the State,
Untractable and harsh to every friend,
Lives only for himself ; in words alone
This doctrine I imbibed not. Through a sense
Of virtuous shame and reverence for my kindred
When I in peace at Argos might have dwelt,
I singly shared the toils of Hercules,
While he on earth remained ; but now he dwells
In heaven, I guard his children, though protection
Be what I need myself. For when their sire
Forsook this nether world, Eurystheus strove
Immediately to slay us ; but I 'scaped
From that oppressor's fangs, and though to me
Lost is my country, I have saved my life.
But we poor vagabonds, from city fly
To some fresh city, ever forced to change
Our dwelling ; for Eurystheus deems it meet
To add this wrong to former wrongs, he sends
His heralds wheresoe'er he hears we settle,
And claims and drives us forth from every land ;
No slight resentment from the Argive realm
Against our friends denouncing, he reminds them
Of his own prosperous fortunes ; when they see

My weakness, and these little ones bereft
Of their great father, to superior might
They crouch, and force the suppliant to depart.
But with the exiled race of Hercules
A voluntary exile, I partake
Their evil fortunes, steadfastly resolved
Not to betray them ; by malignant tongues
It never shall be said, " Oh, mark these orphans !
Since their sire's death their kinsman Iolaus
Protects them not." But, exiled from all Greece,
On reaching Marathon and the domain
Subject to the same rulers, here we sit
Before the altars of the gods, and sue
For their assistance. In this region dwell
Two sons of Theseus, I am told, by lot
Who portion out this realm, they from Pandion
Descend, and to these children are allied.
We therefore undertook our present journey
To the Athenian realm ; two aged guides
Conduct the hapless wanderers ; my attention
Is to the boys devoted ; but Alcmena,
Entering the adjacent temple, in her arms
Tenderly clasps the female progeny
Of her departed son. Amid the crowd
We fear to introduce these tender virgins,
Or place them at the altars of the gods.
But Hyllus and his brothers, more mature
In years, inquire in what far distant land
A fortress for our future residence
We yet can find, if we from these domains
By force should be expelled. My sons, come hither,
Cling to this garment ; for to us I see
Eurystheus' herald coming, by whose hate,
We wanderers, banished from each friendly realm,
Are still pursued. Thou, execrable miscreant,
Perish thyself, and perish he who sent thee :
For to the noble father of these children
Oft hath that tongue enjoined severest toils.

COPREUS, IOLAUS.

COP. What, think'st thou unmolested to enjoy
This pleasant seat, and have thy vagrant steps
Entered at length a city prompt to fight
Thy battles ? for the man who will prefer
Thy feeble arm to that of great Eurystheus,
Exists not. Hence ! why in these useless toils
Dost thou persist ? thou must return to Argos
Where they have doomed thee to be stoned.

IOL.

Not thus :

For in this altar shall I find protection,
And this free country on whose soil we tread.

COP. Wilt thou constrain me then to have recourse
To violence ?

IOL. With forceful hand, nor me
Nor these poor children shalt thou hence expel.

COP. Ere long shalt thou perceive that thou hast uttered
Erroneous prophesies.

IOL. This ne'er shall be
Long as I live.

COP. Depart, for I will seize them
'Gainst thy consent, and to Eurystheus' power
Surrender up, for they to him belong.

IOL. Aid me, ye ancient citizens of Athens,
For we, though suppliants, forcibly are torn
E'en from Jove's public altar, and the wreaths
Twined round our sacred branches are polluted ;
Shame to your city, insult to the gods.

CHORUS, IOLAUS, COPREUS.

CHOR. What clamorous voices from yon altars rise ?
What mischiefs are impending ?

IOL. See a man
Burdened with age, wretch that I am ! lie prostrate.

CHOR. Who threw thee down ? what execrable hand——

IOL. 'Tis he, O stranger, he who to your gods
Yielding no reverence, strives with impious force
E'en now, to drag me from this hallowed seat
Before Jove's altar.

CHOR. He ! But from what land
Cam'st thou, old man, to this confederate state
Formed of four cities ? From the distant coast
Of steep Eubœa did ye ply your oars ?

IOL. The life I lead, O stranger, is not that
Of vagrant islanders ; but in your realm
From famed Mycene's bulwarks I arrive.

CHOR. Among thy countrymen, old man, what name
Thou bear'st, inform me.

IOL. Ye perchance knew somewhat
Of Iolaus, great Alcides' comrade,
A name not quite unnoticed by renown.

CHOR. I formerly have heard of him : but say
Who is the father of that infant race,
Whom with thy arm thou guid'st ?

IOL. These are the sons
Of Hercules, O strangers, they, to you,
And to your city, humble suppliants come.

CHOR. On what account, inform me ; to demand
An audience of the state ?

IOL. That to their foes
They may not be surrendered up, nor torn
Forcibly from the altars of your gods,
And carried back to Argos.

COP. But thy lords
Who bear rule over thee, and hither trace
Thy steps, will ne'er be satisfied with this.

CHOR. O stranger, 'tis our duty to revere
The suppliants of the gods : with forceful hand
Shall no man drag thee from this holy spot,
This seat of the immortal powers ; dread justice
Shall guard thee from the wrong.

COP. Out of your land
The vagrant subjects of Eurystheus drive,
As I admonish ; and this hand shall use
No violence.

CHOR. How impious is that city
Which disregards the helpless stranger's prayer !

COP. 'Twere best to interfere not in these broils,
And to adopt some more expedient counsels.

CHOR. You, therefore, to the monarch of this realm
Should have declared your errand, ere thus far
You had proceeded : but with brutal force
These strangers from the altars of the gods
Presume not to convey, and to this land
Of freedom yield due reverence.

COP. But what king
Rules this domain and city ?

CHOR. Theseus' son,
Renowned Demophoon.

COP. Better I with him
This contest could decide : for all I yet
Have spoken, is but a mere waste of words.

CHOR. Behold, he hither comes in haste, and with him,
To hear this cause, his brother Acamas.

DEMOPHOON, IOLAUS, COPREUS, CHORUS.

DEM. Since by thy speed, old man, thou hast outstripped
Thy juniors, and already reached the shrine
Of Jove, inform me what event hath caused
This multitude t' assemble.

CHOR. There the sons
Of Hercules in suppliant posture sit,
And with their wreaths, as you behold, O king,
Adorn the altar ; that is Iolaus,
The faithful comrade of their valiant sire.

DEM. How needed their distress these clamorous shrieks ?

CHOR. [*turning towards COPREUS.*]

He raised the uproar, when by force he strove
To bear them hence, and on his knees, to earth
Threw the old man, till I for pity wept

DEM. Although he in the habit which he wears
Adopts the mode of Greece, such deeds as these
Speak the barbarian. But without delay
On thee it is incumbent now to tell me
The country whence thou cam'st.

COP.

I am an Argive ;

Thus far to solve your question : but from whence
I come, and on what errand, will I add ;
Mycene's king, Eurystheus, sends me hither
To fetch these vagrants home : yet I, O stranger,
Will with abundant justice, in my actions,
As well as words, proceed ; myself an Argive,
I bear away these Argives, I but seize
The fugitives who from my native land
Escaped, when by the laws which there prevail
They were ordained to bleed. We have a right,
Because we are the rulers of the city,
To execute the sentence we enact
'Gainst our own subjects. To the sacred hearths
Of many other states when they repaired,
We urged the self-same reasons, and none ventured
To be the authors of their own destruction.
But haply they in you may have perceived
A foolish tenderness, and hither come,
Desperate themselves, you also to involve
In the same perils, whether they succeed
Or fail in the emprise : for they no hope
Can cherish, while you yet retain your reason,
That you alone, in all the wide extent
Of Greece, whose various regions they have traversed,
Should pity those calamities which rise
But from their own imprudence. Now compare
Th' alternative proposed ; by sheltering them
In these dominions, or allowing us
To bear them hence, what gain may you expect ?
Side but with us, these benefits are yours :
Eurystheus' self, and Argos' numerous troops,
Will aid this city with their utmost might ;
But if, by their seducing language moved,
Ye harbour groundless pity for their woes,
Arms must decide the strife. Nor vainly think
We will desist till we have fully tried
The temper of our swords. But what excuse
Have ye to plead ? Of what domains bereft
Are ye provoked to wage a desperate war

With the Tirynthian Argives? What allies
 Will aid you? What pretext can ye allege
 To claim funereal honours for the slain?
 The curses of your city will await
 Such conduct; for the sake of that old man,
 Whom I may justly call a tomb, a shadow,
 And those unfriended children, should you step
 Into the yawning gulf. Suppose the best
 Which possibly can happen, that a prospect
 Of future good hence rises; distant hopes
 Fall short of present gain. In riper years
 Ill can these youths be qualified to fight
 Against the Argive host (if this elate
 Your soul with hope), and ere that wished event
 There is a length of intermediate time
 In which ye may be ruined; but comply
 With my advice; on me no gift bestow,
 Let me but take what to ourselves belongs,
 Mycene shall be yours. But oh, forbear
 To act as ye are wont, nor form a league
 With those of no account, when mightier friends
 May be procured.

DEM. Who can decide a cause
 Or ascertain its merits till he hear
 Both sides distinctly?

IOL. In your land, O king,
 This great advantage, freedom of reply
 To the malignant charge against me urged,
 I find, and no man, as from other cities,
 Shall drive me hence. But we have nothing left
 For which it now behoves us to contend
 With him, nor aught, since that decree hath passed,
 To do with Argos; from our native land
 We are cast forth. In this distressful state,
 How can he drag us back again with justice
 As subjects of Mycene, to that realm
 Which hath already banished us? We there
 Are only foreigners. But why should he
 Whom Argos dooms to exile, by all Greece
 Be also exiled? Not by Athens sure;
 For ne'er will Athens from its blest domains
 Expel the race of Hercules, appalled
 By Argos' menaced wrath. For neither Trachis,
 Nor is that city of Achaia here,
 Whence thou by boasting of the might of Argos
 In words like those which thou hast uttered now,
 These suppliants didst unjustly drive away
 Though seated at the altars. If thy threats
 Here too prevail, no longer shall we find

Freedom, not e'en in Athens ; but I know
 Full well the generous temper of its sons,
 And rather would they die. For to the brave
 Shame is a load which renders life most hateful.
 Enough of Athens—for immoderate praise
 Becomes invidious ; I remember too
 How oft I have been heretofore distressed
 By overstrained encomiums. But on you
 How greatly 'tis incumbent to protect
 These children will I show, since o'er this land
 You rule ; for Pitheus was the son of Pelops,
 From Pitheus Æthra sprung, from Æthra Theseus
 Your father ; from your ancestors to those
 Of your unhappy suppliants I proceed ;
 Alcides was the son of thundering Jove
 And of Alcmena ; from Lysidice,
 Daughter of Pelops, did Alcmena spring,
 One common grandsire gave your grandame birth,
 And theirs ; so near in blood are you to them ;
 But, O Demophoon, what beyond the ties
 Of family you to these children owe
 Will I inform you, and relate how erst
 With Theseus in one bark I sailed, and bore
 Their father's shield, when we that belt, the cause
 Of dreadful slaughter, sought ; and from the caves
 Of Pluto, Hercules led back your sire.
 This truth all Greece attests. They in return
 From you implore this boon, that to their foes
 They may not be surrendered up, nor torn
 By force from these your tutelary gods,
 And banished from this realm. For to yourself
 'Twere infamous and baneful to your city
 Should suppliants, exiles, sprung from ancestors
 The same with yours (ah, miserable me !
 Behold, behold them !) with a forceful arm
 Be dragged away. But to your hands, and beard,
 Lifting these hallowed branches, I entreat you
 Slight not Alcides' children, undertake
 Their cause ; and, oh, to them become a kinsman,
 Become a friend, a father, brother, lord,
 For better were it to admit these claims,
 Than suffer them to fall beneath the rage
 Of Argive tyrants.

CHOR. I with pity heard
 Their woes, O king, but now I clearly see
 How noble birth to adverse fortune yields ;
 For though they spring from an illustrious sire,
 Yet meet they with afflictions they deserve not.

DEM. Three powerful motives urge me, while I view

The misery which attends you, not to spurn
 These strangers ; first dread Jove, before whose altars
 You with these children sit ; next kindred ties,
 And services performed in ancient days,
 Give them a claim to such relief from me
 As from their godlike father mine obtained ;
 And last of all that infamy which most
 I ought to loathe ; for if I should permit
 A foreigner this altar to despoil,
 I in a land of freedom shall no longer
 Appear to dwell, but to surrender up,
 Through fear, the suppliants to their Argive lords,
 In this extreme of danger. Would to heaven
 You had arrived with happier auspices ;
 But tremble not lest any brutal hand
 Should from this hallowed altar force away
 You and the children. Therefore go thou back
 To Argos, and this message to Eurystheus
 Deliver ; tell him too if there be aught
 Which 'gainst our guests he can allege, the laws
 Are open ; but thou shalt not drag them hence.

COP. Not if I prove that it is just, and bring
 Prevailing reasons ?

DEM. How can it be just
 To drive away the suppliant ?

COP. Hence no shame
 Shall light on me, but ruin on your head.

DEM. Should I permit thee to convey them hence
 In me 'twere base indeed.

COP. Let them be banished
 From your domains, and I elsewhere will seize them.

DEM. Thou fool, who deem'st thyself more wise than
 Jove !

COP. All villains may, it seems, take refuge here.

DEM. This altar of the gods, to all affords
 A sure asylum.

COP. In a different light,
 This to Mycene's rulers will appear.

DEM. Am not I then the monarch of this realm ?

COP. Offer no wrong to them, if you are wise.

DEM. Do ye then suffer wrong when I refuse
 To violate the temples of the gods ?

COP. I would not have you enter on a war
 Against the Argives.

DEM. Equally inclined
 Am I to peace, yet will not I yield up
 These suppliants.

COP. Hence am I resolved to drag
 Those who belong to me.

DEM. Thou then to Argos
Shalt not with ease return.

COP. Soon will I make
Th' experiment and know.

DEM. If thou presume
To touch them, thou immediately shalt rue it.

COP. I by the gods conjure you not to strike
A herald.

DEM. Strike I will, unless that herald
Learn to behave discreetly.

CHOR. Go. And you,
O king, forbear to touch him.

COP. I retire :
For weak in combat is a single arm.
But I again shall hither come, and bring
A host of Argives armed with brazen spears :
Unnumbered warriors wait for my return.
The king himself, Eurystheus, is their chief ;
He on the borders of Alcahous' realm
Waits for an answer. He in glittering mail,
Soon as he hears your arrogant reply,
To you, your subjects, this devoted realm,
And all its wasted forests will appear,
For we in vain at Argos should possess
A band so numerous of heroic youths,
If we chastised not your assuming pride. [*Exit COPREUS.*]

DEM. Away, detested miscreant ; for I fear not
Thy Argos : and thou ne'er, by dragging hence
These suppliants, shalt disgrace me : for this city
As an appendage to the Argive realm
I hold not, but its freedom will maintain.

CHOR. 'Tis time each sage precaution to exert,
Ere to the confines of this land advance
The troops of Argos : for Mycene's wrath
Is terrible in combat, and more fierce
Than heretofore will they invade us now.
For to exaggerate facts beyond the truth
Is every herald's custom. To his king,
How many specious tales do you suppose
Of the atrocious insults he endured,
He will relate, and add how he the loss
Of life endangered ?

IOL. To the sons devolve
No honours which exceed the being born
Of an illustrious and heroic sire,
And wedding into virtuous families.
But on that man no praise will I bestow,
Who by his lusts impelled, among the wicked
A nuptial union forms ; hence to his sons

Disgrace, instead of pleasure, he bequeaths.
 For noble birth repels adversity
 Better than abject parentage. When sinking
 Under the utmost pressure of our woes,
 We find these friends and kinsmen, who alone
 Amid the populous extent of Greece
 Stand forth in our behalf. Ye generous youths,
 Now give them your right hands, and in return
 Take those of your protectors : O my sons,
 Draw near : we have made trial of our friends.
 If ye again behold your native walls,
 Possess the self-same mansions, and the honours
 Which your illustrious father erst enjoyed ;
 These deem your saviours and your friends, nor wield
 Against their fostering land the hostile spear.
 On your remembrance let these benefits
 Be ever stamped, and hold this city dear ;
 For they deserve your reverence, who from us
 Repel so great a nation, such a swarm
 Of fierce Pelasgian troops : and, though they see
 Our poverty and exile, have refused
 To yield us up, or banish from their realm.
 Both while I live, and after the cold grave
 Receives me at the destined hour, my friend,
 I with loud voice your merits will applaud,
 Approaching mighty Theseus, and my words
 Shall soothe your father's ear when I recount
 With what humanity you have received us,
 And how protected the defenceless sons
 Of Hercules : by your illustrious birth
 Distinguished, you the glories of your sire
 Through Greece maintain : sprung from a noble lineage,
 Yet are you one among that chosen few
 Who in no instance deviate from the virtues
 Of your great ancestry : although 'mid thousands
 Scarce is a single instance to be found
 Of those who emulate their father's worth.

CHOR. This country, in a just and honest cause,
 Is ever prompt to succour the distressed.
 Hence in its friends' behalf hath it sustained
 Unnumbered toils, and now another conflict
 I see impending.

DEM. Rightly hast thou spoken,
 And in such toils I feel a conscious pride.
 These benefits shall never be forgotten ;
 But an assembly of the citizens
 I instantly will summon, and arrange
 A numerous squadron, to receive the onset
 Of fierce Mycène's host, first sending spies

To meet them, lest they unawares assail us.
 For the bold warrior, who without delay
 Goes forth to battle, keeps the foe aloof.
 I also will collect the seers, and slay
 The victims; but do you, old man, meanwhile
 Enter the palace with these children, leaving
 Jove's altar: for my menial train are there,
 Who will with fond solicitude attend you,
 Although I am not present: but go in.

IOL. I will not leave the altar; on this seat
 We suppliants will remain, and pray to Jove,
 That prosperous fortunes may attend your city.
 But when you from this conflict are with glory
 Released, we to your palace will repair;
 Nor are the gods, who war on our behalf,
 O king, inferior to the gods of Argos.
 For o'er that city, Jove's majestic consort,
 Juno, but here Minerva doth preside.
 This I maintain, that nought ensures success
 Beyond the aid of mightier deities,
 Nor will imperial Pallas be subdued. [*Exit DEMOPHOON.*]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Boast as thou wilt, and urge thy proud demand,
 This nation disregards thy ire,
 Thou stranger from the Argive land.
 Nor can thy sounding words control
 The steadfast purpose of my soul:
 Great Athens, by her lovely choir
 Distinguished, shall unstained preserve
 Her ancient glory, nor from virtue swerve;
 But thou, devoid of wisdom, dost obey
 The son of Sthenelus, the tyrant's impious sway,

II.

Who com'st amidst an independent state,
 In nought inferior to the strength
 Of Argos, and with brutal hate
 Dar'st, though a foreigner, to seize
 The exiles, who our deities
 Implore, and in these realms at length
 From their distress obtain a shield:
 Thou e'en to sceptred monarchs will not yield,
 Yet no just plea thy subtle tongue hath found.
 How can such conduct warp the man whose judgment's
 sound?

III.

Peace is the object of my dear delight :

But thou, O tyrant, thou whose breast

Well may I deem by frenzy is possess'd,

If 'gainst this city thou exert thy might,

Pant'st after trophies which thou ne'er shalt gain.

Bearing targe and brazen lance

Others with equal arms advance.

O thou, who fondly seek'st th' embattled plain,

Shake not these turrets, spare the haunt

Of every gentle grace.—Thou wretch, avaunt.

DEMOPHOON, IOLAUS, CHORUS.

IOL. Why com'st thou hither, O my son, with eyes

Expressive of affliction ? from the foe

What recent information canst thou give ?

Do they delay their march, are they at hand,

Or bring'st thou any tidings ? for the threats

That herald uttered sure will be accomplished.

Blest in the favour of the gods, the tyrant

Exults, I know, and arrogantly deems

That he o'er Athens shall prevail ; but Jove

Chastises the presumptuous.

DEM.

Argos comes

With numerous squadrons, and its king Eurystheus,

Myself beheld him. It behoves the man

Who claims the merit of an able chief,

Not to depend upon his spies alone

To mark the foe's approach. But with his host

He hath not yet invaded these domains,

But halting on yon mountain's topmost ridge

Observes (I from conjecture speak) the road

By which he may lead forth his troops to battle,

And where he in this realm with greatest safety

May station them. Already have I made

Each preparation to repel their onset.

The city is in arms, the victims stand

Before the altars, with their blood t' appease

The wrath of every god, and due lustrations

Are sprinkled by the seers, that o'er our foes

We may obtain a triumph, and preserve

This country. Every prophet who expounds

The oracles, convening, have I searched

Into each sage response of ancient times,

Or public or concealed, on which depends

The welfare of the realm. In all beside

Differ Heaven's mandates : but one dread behest

Runs through the several auspices, to Ceres
 They bid me sacrifice some blooming maid
 Who from a nobler sire derives her birth.
 Zeal have I shown abundant in your cause,
 But will not slay my daughter, nor constrain
 Any Athenian citizen to make
 Such an abhorred oblation: for the man
 Exists not, who is so devoid of reason,
 As willingly to yield his children up
 With his own hands. But what afflicts me most
 Is this: tumultuous crowds appear; some cry,
 'Tis just that we the foreign suppliants aid,
 But others blame my folly. If no means
 Can be devised to satisfy them all,
 Soon will a storm of civil war arise.
 See thou to this, and think of some expedient,
 How ye and how this country may be saved,
 Without the citizens' calumnious tongues
 My fame assailing. For I rule not here
 With boundless power, like a barbarian king;
 Let but my deeds be just, and in return
 Shall I experience justice.

CHOR. Will not Jove
 Suffer this city to exert its courage,
 And aid these hapless strangers as we wish?
 IOL. Our situation, O my sons, resembles
 That of the mariners, who having 'scaped
 The storm's relentless fury, when in sight
 Of land, are from the coast by adverse winds
 Driven back into the deep. Thus from this realm
 Just as we reach the shore, like shipwrecked men,
 Are we expelled. O inauspicious Hope,
 Why didst thou soothe me with ideal joy,
 Although it was ordained that thou should'st leave
 Thy favours incomplete? The king deserves
 At least to be excused, if he consent not
 To slay his subjects' daughters; to this city
 My praise is due, and if the gods would place me
 In the same prosperous fortunes, from my soul
 Your benefits should never be effaced.
 But now, alas! no counsel can I give
 To you, my children. Whither shall we turn?
 What god have we neglected? To what land
 Have we not fled for shelter? We must perish,
 We shall be yielded up. My being doomed
 To die, I heed but for this cause alone,
 That by my death I shall afford delight
 To our perfidious foes. But, O my sons,
 For you I weep, I pity you, I pity

Alcmena, aged mother of your sire,
 Oh, most unhappy in a life too long !
 I too am wretched, who unnumbered toils
 Have fruitlessly endured ; it was ordained,
 It was ordained, alas ! that we should fall
 Into the hands of our relentless foes,
 And meet a shameful, miserable death.
 Know you, what still remains for you to do,
 On my behalf ? For all my hopes of saving
 The children are not vanished. In their stead
 Me to the Argive host surrender up,
 O king, and rush not into needless danger,
 Yet save these children. To retain a love
 Of life becomes me not ; I yield it up
 Without regret. It is Eurystheus' wish
 The rather to seize me, and to expose
 To infamy, because I was the comrade
 Of Hercules ; for frenzy hath possessed
 His soul. The wise man, e'en in those he hates,
 Had rather find discretion than a want
 Of understanding ; for a foe endured
 With sense will pay due reverence to the vanquished.

CHOR. Forbear, old man, thus hastily to blame
 This city ; for to us though it might prove
 More advantageous, yet to our disgrace
 Would it redound, should we betray our guests.

DEM. A generous, but impracticable, scheme
 Is that thou hast proposed : for Argos' king
 In quest of thee no squadrons hither leads.
 What profit to Eurystheus from the death
 Of one so old as thou art could arise ?
 He wants to murder *these* : for to their foes
 The rising blossoms of a noble race,
 To whom the memory of their father's wrongs
 Is present, must be dreadful : for all this
 He cannot but foresee. But if thou know
 Of any other counsel more expedient,
 Adopt it ; for my soul hath been perplexed,
 Since that oracular response I heard
 Which fills me with unwelcome apprehensions.

[*Exit* DEMOPHOON.]

MACARIA, IOLAUS, CHORUS.

MAC. Deem not that I, O strangers, am too bold
 Because I from my chamber venture forth ;
 This is my first request : for silence, joined
 With modesty and a domestic life,
 Is woman's best accomplishment. I heard
 Your groans, O Iolaus, and advanced

Though not appointed by our house to act
 As their ambassadress ; in some degree
 Yet am I qualified for such an office,
 I have so great an interest in the weal
 Of these my brothers ; on my own account
 I also wish to hear if any ill,
 Added to those you have already suffered,
 Torture your soul.

IOL. Not now for the first time,
 On thee, O daughter, most of all the children
 Of Hercules my praise can I bestow :
 But our ill-fated house, just as it seemed
 Emerging from its past disgraces, sinks
 Afresh into inextricable ruin.
 The king informs us, that the seers, whose voice
 Expounds the will of heaven, have signified
 No bull nor heifer, but some blooming maid
 Who from a noble sire derives her birth,
 Must be the victim, if we would redeem
 The city and ourselves from utter ruin ;
 Here then are we perplexed : for his own children
 He says he will not sacrifice, nor those
 Of any of his subjects. Though to me
 Indeed he speaks not plainly, in some sort
 He intimates, that if we by no means
 Can extricate ourselves from these distresses,
 We must find out some other land to flee to,
 For he this realm would from destruction save.

MAC. May we indulge the hope of our escape
 Upon these terms ?

IOL. These only : in all else
 With prosperous fortunes crowned.

MAC. No longer dread
 The spear of Argos, for myself, old man,
 Am ready, ere they doom me to be slain,
 And here stand forth a voluntary victim.
 For what could we allege on our behalf,
 If Athens condescend to undergo
 Dangers so great, while we who have imposed
 These toils on others, though within our reach
 Lie all the means of being saved, yet shrink
 From death ? Not thus : we should provoke the laugh
 Of universal scorn, if, with loud groans,
 We suppliants, at the altars of the gods,
 Should take our seats, and prove devoid of courage,
 From that illustrious father though we spring.
 How can the virtuous reconcile such conduct ?
 This to our glory would forsooth redound
 (O may it never happen !) when this city

Is taken, should we fall into the hands
 Of our triumphant foes, when after all
 Some noble maid reluctant must be dragged
 To Pluto's loathed embrace. But from these realms
 Cast forth, should I become an abject vagrant,
 Must I not blush when any one inquires,
 "Why came ye hither with your suppliant branches
 Too fond of life? Retreat from these domains,
 For we no aid to cowards will afford."
 But if when these are dead, my single life
 Be saved, I cannot entertain a hope
 That I shall e'er be happy: through this motive
 Have caused full many to betray their friends.
 For who with a deserted maid will join,
 Or in the bonds of wedlock, or desire
 That I to him a race of sons should bear?
 I therefore hold it better far to die,
 Than to endure, without deserving them,
 Such foul indignities, as can seem light
 To her alone, who, from a noble race
 Like mine, descends not: to the scene of death
 Conduct, with garlands crown me, and prepare
 If ye think fit, th' initiatory rites;
 Ye hence the foe shall conquer: for this soul
 Shrinks not with mean reluctance. I engage
 For these my brothers, and myself, to bleed
 A willing victim; for with ease detached
 From life, I have imbibed this best of lessons,
 To die with firmness in a glorious cause.

CHOR. Alas! what language shall I find, t' express
 My admiration of the lofty speech
 I from this virgin hear, who for her brothers
 Resolves to die? What tongue can utter words
 More truly generous; or what man surpass
 Such deeds as these?

IOL. Thou art no spurious child,
 But from the godlike seed of Hercules,
 O daughter, dost indeed derive thy birth.
 Although thy words are such as cannot shame,
 Thy fate afflicts me. Yet will I propose
 What may with greater justice be performed.
 Together call the sisters of this maid,
 And to atone for the whole race, let her
 On whom th' impartial lot shall fall, be slain;
 But without such decision 'tis not just
 That thou should'st die.

MAC. I will not die as chance
 The lot dispenses; for I hence should forfeit
 All merit: name not such a scheme, old man.

If me ye will accept, and of my zeal
 Avail yourselves, I gladly yield up life
 Upon these terms, but stoop not to constraint.

IOL. The speech thou now hast uttered soars beyond
 What thou at first didst say, though that was noble :
 But thou thy former courage dost surpass
 By this fresh instance of exalted courage,
 The merit of thy former words, by words
 More meritorious. Daughter, I command not,
 Nor yet oppose thy death : for thou by dying
 Wilt serve thy brothers.

MAC. You in cautious terms
 Command me : fear not, lest on my account
 You should contract pollution : for to die
 Is my free choice. But follow me, old man,
 For in your arms would I expire : attend,
 And o'er my body cast the decent veil :
 To dreadful slaughter dauntless I go forth,
 Because I from that father spring, whose name
 With pride I utter.

IOL. At the hour of death
 I cannot stand beside thee.

MAC. Grant but this,
 That when I breathe my last, I may be tended
 By women, not by men.

IOL. It shall be thus,
 O miserable virgin : for in me
 'Twere base, if I neglected any rite
 That decency enjoins, for many reasons ;
 Because thy soul is great, because 'tis just,
 And of all women I have ever seen,
 Because thou art most wretched. But from these
 And from thy aged kinsman, if thou wish
 For aught, to me thy last behests address.

MAC. Adieu, my venerable friend, adieu !
 Instruct these boys in every branch of wisdom,
 And make them like yourself, they can attain
 No higher pitch ; strive to protect them still,
 And for their sake that valued life prolong ;
 Your children we, to you our nurture owe.
 Me you behold, mature for bridal joys,
 Dying to save them. But may ye, my band
 Of brothers who are here, be blest, and gain
 All those advantages, which to procure
 For you, the falchion shall transpierce my breast.
 Revere this good old man, revere Alcmena
 Your father's aged mother, and these strangers.
 Should ye be ever rescued from your woes,
 Should gracious Heaven permit you to revisit

Your native land, forget not to inter,
 With such magnificence as I deserve,
 Your benefactress, for I have not proved
 Deficient in attention to your welfare,
 But die to save our family. To me
 These monumental honours shall suffice
 Instead of children, or the virgin state,
 If there be aught amid the realms beneath,
 But 'tis my wish there may not : for if grief
 On us frail mortals also there attend,
 I know not whither any one can turn :
 For by the wise hath death been ever deemed
 The most effectual cure for every ill.

IOL. O thou, distinguished by thy lofty soul,
 Be well assured thy glory shall outshine
 That of all other women ; both in life
 And death, shalt thou be honoured by thy friends.
 But ah, farewell ! for with ill-omened words
 I tremble lest we should provoke the goddess,
 Dread Proserpine, to whom thou now art sacred.

[Exit MACARIA.]

My sons I perish : grief unnerves my frame ;
 Support and place me in the hallowed seat :
 And, O my dearest children, o'er my face
 Extend this garment : for I am not pleased
 With what is done : yet, had not Heaven's response
 Found this completion, we must all have died ;
 For we must then have suffered greater ills
 Than these, which are already most severe.

CHORUS.

ODE.

In just proportion, as the gods ordain,
 Is bliss diffused through life's short span,
 Or sorrow portioned out to man :
 No favoured house can still maintain
 From age to age its prosperous state,
 For swift are the vicissitudes of fate,
 Who now assails pride's towering crest,
 Now makes the drooping exile blest.
 From destiny we cannot fly ;
 No wisdom can her shafts repel ;
 But he who vainly dares her power defy
 Compassed with endless toils shall dwell.
 Ask not from Heaven with impious prayer,
 Blessings it cannot grant to man,
 Nor waste in misery life's short span
 O'erwhelmed by querulous despair.

The nymph goes forth to meet a noble death,
 Her brothers and this land to save,
 And fame, with tributary breath
 Shall sound her praises in the grave.
 For dauntless virtue finds a way
 Through labours which her progress would delay.
 Such deeds as these, her father grace,
 And add fresh splendour to her race,
 But if with reverential awe thou shed
 Over the virtuous dead
 A tear of pity, in that tear I'll join,
 Inspired with sentiments like thine.

SERVANT, IOLAUS, CHORUS.

SER. Ye children, hail! but where is Iolaus,
 That aged man; and hath your grandame left
 Her seat before the altar?

IOL. Here am I,
 If aught my presence can avail.

SER. On earth
 Why art thou stretched, what means that downcast look?
 IOL. Domestic cares have harrowed up my soul.

SER. Lift up thy head, arise.
 IOL. I am grown old,
 And all my strength is vanished.

SER. But to thee
 I bring most joyful tidings.

IOL. Who art thou?
 Where have I seen thee? I remember not.

SER. Hyllus' attendant, canst thou not distinguish
 These features?

IOL. O my friend, art thou arrived
 To snatch me from despair?

SER. Most certainly:
 Moreover the intelligence I bring
 Will make thee happy.

IOL. Thee I call, come forth,
 Alcmene, mother of a noble son,
 And listen to these acceptable tidings:
 Full long thy soul, for those who now approach,
 Was torn with grief, lest they should ne'er return.

ALCMENA, SERVANT, IOLAUS, CHORUS.

ALC. Whence with your voice resounds this echoing dome,
 O Iolaus, is another herald
 From Argos come, who forcibly assails you?
 My strength indeed is small, yet be assured
 Of this, presumptuous stranger, while I live
 Thou shalt not bear them hence. May I no more

Be deemed the mother of that godlike son,
When I submit to this. But if thou dare
To touch the children, with two aged foes
Ignobly wilt thou strive.

IOL. Be of good cheer,
Thou hoary matron, banish these alarms ;
No herald with a hostile message comes
From Argos.

ALC. Why then raised you that loud voice,
The harbinger of fear ?

IOL. That from the temple
Thou might'st come forth, and join us.

ALC. What you mean
I comprehend not. Who is this ?

IOL. He tells us
Thy grandson marches hither.

ALC. Hail, O thou
Who bear'st these welcome tidings ? but what brings him
To these domains ? Where is he ? What affairs
Prevented him from coming hither with thee,
To fill my soul with transport ?

SER. He now marshals
The forces which attend him.

ALC. In this conference
Am I no longer then allowed to join ?

IOL. Thou art : but 'tis my business to inquire
Into these matters.

SER. Which of his transactions
Say art thou most solicitous to know ?

IOL. The number of the troops he leads ?
SER. Is great,
I cannot count them.

IOL. The Athenian chiefs
Are sure apprized of this.

SER. They are apprized,
And the left wing is formed.

IOL. Then the whole host
Arrayed in arms is ready for the battle.

SER. The victims to a distance from the ranks
Already are removed.

IOL. But at what distance
Is the encampment of the Argive warriors ?

SER. So near that we their leader can distinguish.

IOL. What is he doing ; marshalling our foes ?

SER. This we conjecture : for I could not hear
His voice : but I must go ; for I my lord
Will not abandon when he nobly braves
The dangers of the field.

IOL. I too with thee

Will join him; for the same are our intentions,
As honour bids us, to assist our friends.

SER. Unwisely hast thou spoken.

IOL. With my friends

Shall not I then the stubborn conflict share?

SER. That strength which erst was thine is now no more.

IOL. Can I not pierce their shields?

SER. Thou may'st: but first,

More likely, fall thyself.

IOL. No foe will dare

To meet me face to face.

SER. By thy mere looks,

With that debilitated arm, no wound

Canst thou inflict.

IOL. My presence in the field

Will to our troops give courage, and augment

Their number.

SER. Of small service to thy friends

Will thy appearance prove.

IOL. Detain me not:

I for some glorious action am prepared.

SER. Thou hast the will to act, but not the power

IOL. I will not be reproached for loitering here,

Say what thou wilt beside.

SER. But without arms

How will thou face yon warriors sheathed in mail?

IOL. The various implements of war are lodged

Beneath these roofs; with freedom will I use,

And if I live, return them; if I die,

The god will not demand them back again.

Go then into the temple, and reach down

Those martial trappings from the golden nails

On which they hang, and bring them to me swiftly.

For this were infamous, while some are fighting,

If others loiter slothfully behind. *[Exit SERVANT.]*

CHOR. Time hath not yet debased that lofty soul

'Tis vigorous, though thy body be decayed.

Why should'st thou enter on these fruitless toils,

Which only injure thee, and to our city

Can be of little service? on thy age

Should'st thou reflect, and lay aside attempts

That are impossible, for by no arts

The long-lost force of youth canst thou regain.

ALC. What schemes are these? distempered in your mind,

Me and my children mean you to abandon?

IOL. The battle is man's province: to thy care

Them I consign.

ALC. But if you die, what means

Have I of being saved?

IOL. The tender care
Of the surviving children of thy son.

ALC. Should they too meet with some severe mishap,
Which may the gods forbid.

IOL. These generous strangers
Will not betray thee ; banish every fear.

ALC. In them I trust : I have no other friend.

IOL. Jove too, I know, is mindful of thy toils.

ALC. I will not speak in disrespectful terms
Of Jove: but whether he his plighted troth
Have kept, full well he knows.

SER. [*returning.*] Thou here behold'st
The brazen panoply, now haste to sheathe
Thy limbs in mail ; the battle is at hand,
And Mars detests a loiterer : if thou fear
Accoutrements so ponderous, to the field
Advance disarmed, nor till thou join the ranks
Wear these unwieldy trappings ; for meantime
I in my hands their burden will sustain.

IOL. Well hast thou spoken ; with those arms attend me
Ready for the encounter, place a spear
In my right hand, and under my left arm
Hold me, and guide my steps.

SER. Shall I conduct
A warrior like a child ?

IOL. I must tread sure,
Else 'twere an evil omen.

SER. Would thy power
Equalled thy zeal.

IOL. Haste: greatly 'twill afflict me
If, left behind, I cannot join the fray.

SER. Slow are thy steps, and hence thou deem'st I move not.

IOL. Behold'st thou not the swiftness of my pace ?

SER. Thou to thyself I see appear'st to hasten,
Although thou gain'st no ground.

IOL. When in the field
Thou seest me, thou wilt own I speak the truth.

SER. What great exploit achieving ? I could wish
That thou might'st prove victorious.

IOL. Through his shield
Some foe transfixing.

SER. We at length may reach
Th' embattled plain, but this I greatly fear.

IOL. Ah, would to heaven, that thou, my withered arm,
Again wert vigorous, as in former days
Thee I remember, when thou didst lay waste
The Spartan realms with Hercules ; thus fight
My battles now, and singly will I triumph
Over Eurystheus, for that dastard fears

To face the dangers of th' embattled field :
 Too apt in our ideas to unite
 Valour with wealth, yet to the prosperous man
 Superior wisdom falsely we ascribe.

[*Exeunt* IOLAUS and SERVANT.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

O fostering Earth, resplendent Moon,
 Who gladd'st the dreary shades of night,
 And thou, enthroned at broadest noon,
 Hyperion, 'midst exhaustless light,
 To me propitious tidings bring,
 Raise to the skies a festive sound,
 And waft the gladsome notes around,
 Till, from the palace of our king,
 They echo through Minerva's fane :
 My house, my country, to maintain
 Against the ruthless spoiler's pride,
 Menaced because this realm extends
 Protection to its suppliant friends,
 I with the sword our contest will decide.

I. 2.

Although there seem just cause for dread,
 When cities like Mycene blest,
 Whose triumphs fame hath widely spread
 Enter this region to invest
 Our bulwarks, harbouring ruthless hate.
 Think, O my country, think what shame,
 Should we reject the suppliant's claim
 Appalled by Argos' haughty state.
 Resistless Jove shall aid the spear
 I brandish unappalled by fear ;
 The tribute of eternal praise
 From all that breathe, to him is due :
 Nor magnified by our weak view
 Shall men above the gods their trophies raise.

II. I.

Descend with venerable mien,
 O thou our guardian and our queen,
 For on thy fostering soil we stand,
 These walls were reared by thy command,

Drive from our menaced gates the lawless host,
 Suppress that Argive tyrant's boast ;
 For if by you unaided, is this hand
 Too weak their fury to withstand.

II. 2.

Thee, O Minerva, we adore,
 Thy altar ever streams with gore :
 We on each moon's concluding day
 To thee our public homage pay ;
 Through every fane harmonious numbers sound,
 Sweet minstrels then breathes around,
 And th' echoing hills their nightly dance repeat
 As the nymphs move with agile feet.

SERVANT, ALCMENA, CHORUS.

SER. O royal dame, the message that to you
 I bring, is both concise, and what reflects
 On me abundant glory to relate,
 In fight have we prevailed, and trophies reared
 On which the armour of your foes is hung.

ALC. This day hath brought thee hither, O my friend,
 Thy freedom for such tidings to receive :
 But one anxiety there still remains
 To which thou leav'st me subject ; much I fear
 For the important lives of those I love.

SER. They live, and have obtained from all the host
 The greatest fame.

ALC. And Iolaus too,
 My aged friend ?

SER. Yet more, he hath performed
 Through the peculiar favour of the gods
 Exploits most memorable.

ALC. What glorious deed
 Hath he achieved in fight ?

SER. From an old man,
 He is grown young again.

ALC. Thou speak'st of things
 Most wonderful. But first, how fought our friends
 With such success, I wish thee to inform me.

SER. All that hath passed, at once will I relate
 When, to each other in the field opposed,
 We had arranged both armies, and spread forth
 The van of battle to its full extent,
 Hyllus alighting from his chariot, stood
 In the midway 'twixt either host, and cried :
 " Thou leader of the Argive troops, who com'st
 With hostile fury to invade this land,
 Thy interests recommend what I propose,

Nor can Mycene suffer from the loss
If thou deprive her of a single warrior ;
Therefore with me encounter hand to hand,
And if thou slay me, seize and bear away
The sons of Hercules ; but if thou die,
My palace and hereditary rank
Permit me to enjoy." The troops assented,
And praised what he had spoken as the means
Of finishing their labours, and a proof
Of his exalted courage. But Eurystheus
Unmoved by reverence for th' assembled host
Who heard the challenge, and with terror smitten,
Forgot the general's part, nor dared to face
The lifted spear, but acted like a dastard :
Yet he who was thus destitute of courage
Came to enslave the sons of Hercules.
Hyllus again retreated to his rank ;
The prophets too, when they perceived no peace
Could be effected by a single combat,
Without delay the blooming virgin slew,
Auspicious victim, from whose pallid lips
Her trembling spirit fled. The lofty car
Some mounted, o'er their sides while others flung
Their bucklers to protect them. To his host,
Meantime the king of Athens, in a strain
Worthy of his exalted courage, spoke :
" Ye citizens, the land to which ye owe
Your nourishment and birth, now claims your aid."
Equally loth to sully the renown
Of Argos and Mycene, in like terms
The foe besought his partners of the war
Their utmost vigour to exert. No sooner
Had the loud signal by Etruria's trumpet
Been given, than they in thickest battle joined.
Think with what crash their brazen shields resounded,
What groans and intermingled shouts were heard !
First through our lines the host of Argos burst,
And in their turn gave way : then foot to foot,
And man to man opposed, in stubborn conflict
We all persisted : multitudes were slain ;
But in this language either chief his troops
Encouraged : " O ye citizens of Athens,
O ye who till the fruitful Argive field,
Will ye not from your native land repel
The foul disgrace ?" But with our utmost efforts
Scarce could we put to flight the Argive host.
When Iolaus saw young Hyllus break
The ranks of battle, he with lifted hands
Entreated him to place him in his car,

Then seized the reins, and onward in pursuit
 Of the swift coursers of Eurystheus drove.
 As to the sequel ; from report alone
 Let others speak, I tell what I have seen :
 While through Pallènè's streets he passed, where rise
 Minerva's altars, soon as he descried
 The chariot of Eurystheus, he a prayer
 Addressed to blooming Hebe, and to Jove,
 That for that single day he might recover
 The pristine vigour of his youth, and punish
 His foes as they deserve. You now shall hear
 What a miraculous event ensued ;
 Two stars 'bove Iolaus' chariot stood,
 And overshadowed it with gloomy clouds,
 Which, by the wise 'tis said, were Hercules
 Your son, and blooming Hebe : from that mist
 Which veiled the skies, the chief grown young again,
 Displayed his vigorous arms, and near the rocks
 Of Scyron, seized Eurystheus in his car.
 Binding his hands with chains, he hither brings
 The Argive tyrant, a distinguished prize,
 Who once was happy ; but on all mankind
 Loudly inculcates by his present fortunes
 This lesson : not too rashly to ascribe
 Felicity to him who in appearance
 Is prosperous, but to wait till we behold
 His close of life ; for fortune day by day
 Doth waver.

CHOR. Thou great author of success,
 O Jove, at length am I allowed to view
 The day, by which my terrors are dispelled.

ALC. 'Twas late indeed, when thou, O Jove, didst look
 On my afflictions ; yet am I to thee
 Most grateful for the kindness thou hast shown me.
 And though I erst believed not that my son
 Dwells with the gods, I clearly know it now.
 Now, O my children, ye from all your toils
 Shall be set free, and of Eurystheus, doomed
 With shame to perish, burst the galling yoke,
 Behold your father's city, the rich fields
 Of your inheritance again possess,
 And sacrifice to your paternal gods,
 From whom excluded, in a foreign land
 Ye led a wandering miserable life.
 But with what sage design yet undisclosed,
 Hath Iolaus spared Eurystheus' life,
 Inform me : for to us it seems unwise
 Not to avenge our wrongs when we have caught
Our enemies.

SER. He through respect to you
 Hath acted thus, that you might see the tyrant
 Vanquished, and rendered subject to your power,
 Not by his own consent, but in the yoke
 Bound by necessity ; for he was loth
 To come into your presence, ere he bleed,
 And suffer as he merits. But farewell,
 O venerable matron, and remember
 The promise you first made when I began
 These tidings, and, oh, set me free: for nought
 But truth should from ingenuous lips proceed.
[Exit SERVANT.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

To me the choral song is sweet,
 When the shrill flute and genial banquet meet,
 If Venus also grace the festive board :
 I taste a more refined delight
 Now I behold my friends (transporting sight !)
 To unexpected happiness restored.
 For in this nether world, eventful Fate,
 And Saturn's offspring Time, full many a change create.

I. 2.

Follow the plain and beaten way,
 From Justice, O my country, never stray,
 Nor cease the powers immortal to revere.
 To heights scarce short of frenzy rise
 The errors of that mortal, who denies
 Assent to truths confirmed by proofs so clear.
 Jove's power by signal judgments is descried,
 Oft as his vengeance blasts the towering crest of pride.

II. I.

In heavenly mansions with the blest,
 Thy son, O venerable dame, doth rest ;
 He hath confuted those invidious tales,
 That to loathed Pluto's house he came
 Soon as he perished in that dreadful flame :
 He under roofs of burnished gold regales,
 On the soft couch of lovely Hebe placed ;
 Them two, both sprung from Jove, O Hymen, thou hast
 graced.

II. 2.

Events, which strike man's wondering eyes,
 From a variety of causes rise.
 For fame relates how Pallas saved the sire,
 And from her city far renowned,
 Her race, protection have the children found;
 She hath suppressed th' o'erweening tyrant's ire,
 Whose violence no laws could ere control;
 Curse on such boundless pride, that fever of the soul.

MESSENGER, EURYSTHEUS, ALCMENA, CHORUS.

MES. Your eyes indeed behold, O royal dame,
 Yet shall this tongue declare that we have brought
 Eurytheus hither, unexpected sight,
 Reverse of fortune his presumptuous soul
 Foresaw not, this oppressor little deemed
 That he should ever fall into your hands,
 When from Mycene, by the Cyclops' toil
 Erected, he those squadrons led, and hoped
 With pride o'erweening to lay Athens waste;
 But Heaven our situation hath reversed:
 And therefore with exulting Hyllus joins
 The valiant Iolaus, in erecting
 Trophies to Jove the author of our conquest.
 But they to you commanded me to lead
 This captive, wishing to delight your soul:
 For 'tis most grateful to behold a foe
 Fall'n from the height of gay prosperity.

ALC. Com'st thou, detested wretch? at length hath Justice
 O'ertaken thee? First hither turn thy head,
 And dare to face thine enemies: for, dwindled
 Into a vassal, thou no longer rul'st.
 Art thou the man (for I would know the truth)
 Who didst presume to heap unnumbered wrongs,
 Thou author of all mischief, on my son
 While yet he lived, wherever now resides
 His dauntless spirit? For in what one instance
 Didst thou not injure him? At thy command,
 Alive he travelled to th' infernal shades;
 Thou sent'st, and didst commission him to slay
 Hydras and lions. Various other mischiefs,
 Which were by thee contrived, I mention not,
 For an attempt to speak of them at large
 Would be full tedious. Nor was it enough
 For thee to venture on these wrongs alone,
 But thou, moreover, from each Grecian state
 Me and these children hast expelled, though seated
 As suppliants at the altars of the gods,

Confounding those whose locks are grey through age
 With tender infants. But thou here hast found
 Those who were men indeed, and a free city
 Which feared thee not. Thou wretchedly shalt perish,
 And pay this bitter usury to atone
 For all thy crimes, whose number is so great
 That it were just thou more than once shouldst die.

MES. You must not kill him.

ALC. Then have we in vain
 Taken him captive. But what law forbids
 His being slain?

MES. The rulers of this land
 Consent not.

ALC. Is it not by them esteemed
 A glorious action to despatch our foes?

MES. Not such as they have seized alive in battle.

ALC. Is Hyllus satisfied with this decree?

MES. He, in my judgment, will forsooth act rightly,
 If he oppose what Athens shall enjoin.

ALC. The captive tyrant ill deserves to live,
 Or longer view the sun.

MES. In this first instance
 They did amiss, when by their swords he died not.

ALC. Is it not just that he should suffer still?

MES. He who will slay him is not to be found.

ALC. What shall I say if some adventurous hand——

MES. If you do this, you will incur great censure.

ALC. I love this city, I confess : but no man,
 Since he is fall'n into my power, shall force
 This prisoner from me : let them call me bold
 And more presumptuous than becomes a woman,
 I am resolved to execute my purpose.

MES. Full well I know the hatred which you bear
 To this unhappy man is terrible,
 And such as merits pardon.

EUR. Be convinced
 Of this, O woman, that I cannot flatter,
 Nor to preserve this wretched life say aught,
 Whence they may brand me with a dastard's name.
 For I with much reluctance undertook
 This contest ; near in blood am I to thee,
 And of that race whence sprung thy son Alcides.
 But whether I consented, or was loth,
 Me Juno caused by her immortal power
 To harbour this dire frenzy in my breast.
 Since I became his foe, since I resolved
 Upon this strife, much mischief I devised,
 And brooded o'er it many a tedious night,
 That after I had wearied out and slain

Those I abhorred, I might no longer lead
 A life of fear : for well I knew thy son
 Was no mere cipher, but a man indeed :
 Though strong my hate, on him will I confer
 The praise he merits from his valiant deeds.
 But after he was dead, was I not forced,
 Because I was a foe to these his sons,
 And knew what bitter enmity 'gainst me
 They from their sire inherited, to leave
 No stone unturned, to slay, to banish them,
 And plot their ruin ? Could I have succeeded
 In these designs, my throne had stood secure.
 If thou my prosperous station hadst obtained,
 Wouldst thou not have attempted to hunt down
 The lion's whelps, instead of suffering them
 At Argos unmolested to reside ?
 Thou canst prevail on no man to give credit
 To such assertions : therefore, since my foes
 Forbore to slay me, when prepared to lose
 My life in battle, by the laws of Greece,
 If I now die, my blood will fix a stain
 Of lasting guilt on him who murders me.
 This city hath discreetly spared my life,
 More influenced by its reverence for the gods
 Than by the hatred which to me it bears.
 My answer to the charges thou hast urged
 Against me, having heard, esteem me now
 A suppliant, and though wretched, still a king,
 For such is my condition : though to die
 I wish not, yet can I without regret
 Surrender up my life.

CHOR. To you, Alcmena,
 A little wholesome counsel would I give,
 This captive monarch to release, since such
 The pleasure of the city.

ALC. If he die,
 And to the mandates of th' Athenian realm
 I still submit, what mischief can ensue ?

CHOR. 'Twere best of all. But how can these two things
 Be reconciled ?

ALC. I will inform you how
 This may with ease be done. I, to his friends,
 When slain will yield him up, and with this land
 Comply in the disposal of his corse :
 But he shall die to sate my just revenge.

EUR. Destroy me if thou wilt ; to thee I sue not :
 But on this city, since it spared my life
 Through pious reverence, and forbore to slay me,
 Will I bestow an ancient oracle

Of Phœbus, which in future times shall prove
 More advantageous than ye now suppose ;
 For after death, so have the Fates decreed,
 My corse shall ye inter before the temple
 Of the Pallenian maid : to you a friend
 And guardian of your city, shall I rest
 Beneath this soil for ever ; but a foe
 To those who spring from this detested race
 When with their armies they invade this land
 Requiting with ingratitude your kindness :
 Such strangers ye protect. But thus forewarned,
 Why came I hither ? Through a fond belief
 That Juno was with far superior power
 To each oracular response endued,
 And that my cause she ne'er would have betrayed.
 On me waste no libations, nor let gore
 Be poured forth on the spot of my interment,
 For I to punish these their impious deeds,
 Will cause them with dishonour to return :
 From me shall ye receive a double gain,
 For you I will assist, and prove to them
 Most baneful e'en in death.

ALC.

Why are ye loth

To slay this man, if what ye hear be true,
 That welfare to this city hence will spring,
 And your prosperity ? For he points out
 The safest road. Alive he is a foe,
 But after he is dead will prove a friend.
 Ye servants bear him hence, and to the dogs
 Cast forth without delay his breathless corse :
 Think not, presumptuous wretch, that thou shalt live
 Again t' expel me from my native land.

CHOR. With this am I well pleased. My followers, go.
 For hence in our king's sight shall we stand guiltless.

R H E S U S .

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

CHORUS OF TROJAN

SENTINELS,

HECTOR.

ÆNEAS.

DOLON.

A SHEPHERD.

RHESUS.

ULYSSES.

DIOMEDE.

PARIS.

MINERVA.

THE MUSE.

THE CHARIOTEER OF

RHESUS.

SCENE.—BEFORE HECTOR'S TENT AT THE GATES OF TROY.

CHORUS, HECTOR.

CHOR. Let some swift sentinel to Hector's tent
Go and inquire if any messenger
Be yet arrived, who recent tidings bears
From those, who during the fourth nightly watch
Are by the host deputed. On your arm
Sustain your head, unfold those low'ring eyelids,
And from your lowly couch of withered leaves,
O Hector, rise, for it is time to listen.

HEC. Who comes? art thou a friend? pronounce the watch-
word.

Who are ye, that by night approach my bed?
Speak out.

CHOR. We guard the camp.

HEC.

Why com'st thou hither

With this tumultuous haste?

CHOR.

Be of good cheer.

HEC. I am. Hast thou discovered in the camp

This night some treachery?

CHOR.

None.

HEC.

Why then deserting

The post where thou art stationed, dost thou rouse
The troops, unless thou through this midnight gloom
Bring some important tidings? know'st thou not
That near the Argive host we under arms
Take our repose.

CHOR. Prepare your brave allies :
 Go to their chambers, bid them wield the spear,
 Rouse them from slumber, and despatch your friends
 To your own troop ; caparison the steeds.
 Who bears the swift alarm to Pantheus' son ?
 Who to Europa's offspring, Lycia's chief ?
 Where are the priests who should inspect the victims ?
 Who leads the light-armed squadron to the field ?
 And where are Phrygia's archers ? Let each bow
 Be strung.

HEC. Thy tidings are in part alarming,
 In part thou giv'st us courage, though thou speak
 Nought plainly. By the terrifying scourge
 Of Pan hast thou been smitten, that thou leav'st
 Thy station to alarm the host ? Explain
 These clamorous sounds. What tidings shall I say
 Thou bring'st ? Thy words are many, but their drift
 I comprehend not.

CHOR. All night long, O Hector,
 The Grecian camp hath kindled fires, the torches
 Amid their fleet are blazing, and the host
 Tumultuous rush to Agamemnon's tent,
 At midnight calling on the king t' assemble
 A council : for the sailors never yet
 Were thus alarmed. But I, because I fear
 What may ensue, these tidings hither bring,
 Let you should charge me with a breach of duty.

HEC. Full seasonably thou com'st, although thou speak
 Words fraught with terror : for these dastards hope
 They in their barks shall from this shore escape
 Ere I discover them : their kindled fires
 Prove this suspicion. Thou, O partial Jove,
 Hast robbed me of my triumph, like the prey
 Torn from the lion, ere I have destroyed
 With this avenging spear the Grecian host.
 Had not the sun withdrawn his radiant beams,
 I the successful battle had prolonged
 Till I had burnt their ships, and hewn a way
 Through their encampments, and in slaughter drenched
 My bloody hand. I would have fought by night
 And taken my advantage of the gales
 Sent by auspicious fortune : but the wise,
 And seers who knew the will of Heaven, advised me
 To wait but till to-morrow's dawn appeared,
 And then sweep every Grecian from the land.
 But now no longer will they stay to prove
 The truth of what my prophets have foretold :
 For cowards in the midnight gloom are brave.
Instantly therefore through the host proclaim

These orders : " Take up arms, and rouse from sleep ; "
Pierced through the back as to the ships he flies,
So shall full many a dastard with his gore
Distain the steep ascent ; the rest fast bound
In galling chains shall learn to till our fields.

CHOR. O Hector, ere you learn the real fact,
You are too hasty : for we know not yet
That they are flying.

HEC. Wherefore then by night
Are those fires kindled through the Grecian camp ?

CHOR. I am not certain, though my soul full strongly
Suspects the cause.

HEC. If thou fear this, thou tremblest
At a mere shadow.

CHOR. Such a light ne'er blazed
Before among the foes.

HEC. Nor such defeat
In battle, did they e'er till now experience.

CHOR. This have you done ; look now to what remains.

HEC. I give this short direction : take up arms
Against the foe.

CHOR. Behold ! Æneas comes :
Sure, from his haste, some tidings, which deserve
His friends' attentive ear, the warrior brings.

ÆNEAS, HECTOR, CHORUS.

ÆNE. What mean the watch, O Hector, who by night
Were to their stations in the camp assigned,
That they, with terror smitten, at your chamber
In a nocturnal council have assembled ?
And why is the whole army thus in motion ?

HEC. Put on thy arms, Æneas.

ÆNE. What hath happened ?
Are you informed that in this midnight gloom
The foe hath formed some stratagem ?

HEC. They fly !
They mount their ships.

ÆNE. What proof have you of this ?

HEC. All night their torches blaze ; to me they seem
As if they would not wait to-morrow's dawn :
But, kindling fires upon their lofty decks,
They sure fly homeward from this hostile land.

ÆNE. But why, if it be thus, prepare your troops
For battle ?

HEC. As they mount the deck, this spear
Shall overtake the dastards ; I their flight
Will harass : for 'twere base, and prejudicial
As well as base, when Heaven delivers up

The foe into our hands, to suffer those
Who wronged us to escape without a conflict.

ÆNE. Ah! would to Heaven you equally stood foremost
In wisdom, as in courage : but one man
By bounteous Nature never was endued
With knowledge universal : various gifts
Doth she dispense, to you the warrior's palm,
To others sapient counsels : now you hear
Their torches blaze, you thence infer the Greeks
Are flying, and would lead the troops by night
Over the trenches : but when you have passed
The yawning fosse, should you perceive the foes
Instead of flying from the land, resist,
With dauntless courage, your protended spear,
If you are vanquished, to these sheltering walls
You never can return : for in their flight
How shall the troops o'er slanting palisades
Escape, or, how the charioteer direct
Over the narrow bridge his crashing wheels ?
If you prevail, you have a foe at hand,
The son of Peleus, from your flaming torches
Who will protect the fleet, nor suffer you
Utterly to destroy the Grecian host
As you expect ; for he is brave. Our troops
Let us then leave to rest from martial toils,
And sleep beside their shields. That we despatch
Amid the foe some voluntary spy,
Is my advice : if they prepare for flight,
Let us assail the Greeks ; but if those fires
Are kindled to ensnare us, having learned
The enemy's intentions, let us hold
A second council on this great emprise.
Illustrious chief, I have declared my thoughts.

CHORUS.

I.

These counsels I approve : thy wayward scheme,
O Hector, change, and think the same :
For perilous commands I deem,
Given by the headstrong chief, deserve our blame.
Why send not to the fleet a spy,
Who may approach the trenches, and descry
With what intent our foes upon the strand
Have kindled many a flaming brand ?

HEC. Ye have prevailed, because ye all concur
In one opinion : but depart, prepare
Thy fellow-soldiers, for perhaps the host

May by the rumours of our nightly council
Be put in motion. I will send a spy
Among the Greeks ; and if we learn what schemes
They have devised, the whole of my intentions
To thee will I immediately reveal
In person. With confusion and dismay
But if the foe precipitate their flight,
Give ear, and follow where the clanging trump
Summons thee forth, for then I cannot wait,
But will this night attack the Grecian host,
Storm their entrenchments, and destroy their fleet.

ÆNE. Despatch the messenger without delay.
For you now think discreetly, and in me
Shall find, when needed, in your bold enterprise
A firm associate. [Exit ÆNEAS.

HEC. What brave Trojan, present
At this our conference, as a spy will go
T' explore the Grecian navy ? to this land
What generous benefactor will arise ?
Who answers ? for I singly cannot serve
The cause of Troy and its confederate bands
In every station.

DOL. For my native realm,
Facing this danger, to the fleet of Greece
I as a spy will go ; and when I've searched
Into the progress of our foes, return :
But I on these conditions undertake
The toilsome enterprise—

HEC. Thou well deserv'st
Thy name, and to thy country art a friend,
O Dolon ; for this day thy father's house,
Which is already noble, thou exalt'st
With double fame.

DOL. I therefore ought to strive :
But after all my labours let me reap
A suitable reward. If gain arise
From the performance of the task enjoined,
We feel a twofold joy.

HEC. This were but just :
I contradict thee not : name thy reward ;
Choose what thou wilt, except the rank I bear.
DOL. Your rich domains I wish not to possess.

HEC. To thee a daughter of imperial Priam
In marriage shall be given.

DOL. With my superiors
I will not wed.

HEC. Abundant gold is ours,
If thou prefer this stipend.

DOL. My own house

With wealth is furnished, I am far remote
From want.

HEC. What then dost thou desire that Troy
Contains?

DOL. When you have conquered the proud Greeks,
Promise to give me——

HEC. I will give thee all
That thou canst ask, except my royal captives.

DOL. Slay them; I seek not to withhold your arm
From cutting off the vanquished Menelaus.

HEC. Is it thy wish, Oileus' son to thee
Should be consigned?

DOL. The hands of princes, nurtured
Effeminately, are not formed to till
The stubborn soil.

HEC. From which of all the Greeks
Taken alive wouldst thou receive his ransom?

DOL. Already have I told you, that at home
I have abundant riches.

HEC. Thou shalt choose
Among our spoils.

DOL. For offerings let them hang
High in the temples of the gods.

HEC. What gift
Greater than these canst thou from me require?

DOL. Achilles' steeds: for when I stake my life
On Fortune's die, 'twere reasonable to strive
For such an object as deserves my toils.

HEC. Although thou in thy wishes to possess
Those steeds hast interfered with me: for sprung
From an immortal race themselves immortal
They bear Pelides through the ranks of war,
Neptune, 'tis said, the king of ocean, tamed them
And gave to Peleus: I, who prompted thee
To this emprise, will not bely thy hopes,
But to adorn thy noble father's house,
On thee Achilles' generous steeds bestow.

DOL. This claims my gratitude: if I succeed,
My courage will for me obtain a palm,
Such as no Phrygian ever won before:
Nor should you envy me, for joys unnumbered
And the first station in the realm, are yours.

[Exit HECTOR.]

CHORUS.

II.

The danger's great, but great rewards allure
Thee, generous youth, t' assert thy claim,
Thrice blest if thou the gift procure,
Yet will thy toils deserve immortal fame:

Th' allies of kings let grandeur tend,
May Heaven and Justice thy emprise befriend,
For thou already seem'st to have acquired
All that from man can be desired.

DOL. I am resolved to go : but my own doors
First must I enter, and myself attire
In such a garb as suits my present scheme,
Thence will I hasten to the Argive fleet.

CHOR. What other dress intend'st thou to assume
Instead of that thou wear'st?

DOL. Such as befits
My errand and the stealth with which I travel.

CHOR. We ought to gain instruction from the wise.
What covering hast thou chosen for thy body?

DOL. I to my back will fit the tawny hide
Of a slain wolf, will muffle up my front
With the beast's hairy visage, fit my hands
To his fore-feet, thrust into those behind
My legs, and imitate his savage gait ;
Approaching undiscovered by the foe,
The trenches and the ramparts that defend
The navy : but whenever I shall come
To desert places, on two feet I mean
To travel : such deception have I framed.

CHOR. May Hermes, Maïa's offspring, who presides
O'er well-conducted fallacies, assist
Thy journey thither, and with safety lead
Thy homeward steps ! for well thou understand'st
The business ; there is nought which yet thou need'st
But good success.

DOL. I shall return in safety,
And having slain Ulysses, or the son
Of Tydeus, bring to you their ghastly heads:
For omens of assured success are mine:
Then say that Dolon reached the Grecian fleet.
These hands stained with gore, my native walls
Will I revisit ere the sun arise. [Exit DOLON.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

O thou, who issuing with majestic tread
From Delian, Lycian, or Thymbræan fanes,
Twang'st thy unerring bow; on Phrygia's plains,
Apollo, thy celestial influence shed,
Hither come with nightly speed,
The enterprising chief to lead

Through mazes undiscovered by our foes ;
 Aid thy loved Dardanian line,
 For matchless strength was ever thine,
 Constructed by thy hand Troy's ancient bulwarks rose.

I. 2.

Speed Dolon's journey to the Grecian fleet,
 Let him espy th' entrenchments of their host ;
 Again in triumph from the stormy coast
 Conduct the warrior to his native seat ;
 May he mount that chariot drawn
 By steeds that browsed the Phthian lawn
 When our brave lord, the Mars of Greece, hath slain ;
 Coursers of unrivalled speed,
 Which erst to Eacus' seed
 To Peleus, Neptune gave who rules the billowy main.

II. I.

His country, his paternal walls, to save,
 The generous youth explores the anchored fleet :
 From me such worth shall due encomiums meet.
 How few with hardy bosoms stem the wave,
 When Hyperion veils his face,
 And cities tremble on their base !
 At this dread crisis Phrygian heroes rise,
 Mysian chiefs, uncurbed by fear,
 Brandish with nervous arm the spear ,
 Curst be the lying tongue that slanders my allies.

II. 2.

In savage guise now Dolon stalks arrayed,
 With step adventurous o'er the hostile ground :
 What Grecian chief shall feel the deadly wound,
 While the wolf's hide conceals his glittering blade ?
 Weltering first in crimson gore,
 May Menelaus rise no more ;
 Next may the victor, Agamemnon's head
 Bear to Helen, stung with grief
 At her affinity to that famed chief
 Who in a thousand ships to Troy his squadrons led.

A SHEPHERD, HECTOR, CHORUS.

SHEP. Most gracious monarch, may I ever greet
 My lords with tidings such as now I bring !
 HEC. Full oft misapprehension clouds the soul
 Of simple rustics : to thy lord in arms
 Thou of thy fleecy charge art come to speak

At this unseemly crisis : know'st thou not
My mansion, or the palace of my sire ?
There ought'st thou to relate how fare thy flock.

SHEP. We shepherds are, I own, a simple race,
Yet my intelligence deserves attention.

HEC. Such fortunes as befall the fold, to me
Relate not, for I carry in this hand
The battle and the spear.

SHEP. I too am come
Such tidings to unfold ; for a brave chief,
Your friend, the leader of a numerous host,
Marches to fight the battles of this realm.

HEC. But from what country ?

SHEP. Thrace, and he is called
The son of Strymon.

HEC. Didst thou say, that Rhesus
Hath entered Ilion's fields ?

SHEP. You comprehend me,
And have anticipated half my speech.

HEC. Why doth he travel over Ida's hill,
Deserting that broad path where loaded wains
With ease might move ?

SHEP. I have no certain knowledge ;
Yet may we form conjectures ; 'tis a scheme
Most prudent, with his host to march by night
Because he hears the plain with hostile bands
Is covered : but us rustics he alarmed,
Who dwell on Ida's mount, the ancient seat
Of Ilion's first inhabitants, by night
When through that wood, the haunt of savage beasts
The warrior trod : for with a mighty shout
The Thracian host rushed on, but we, our flocks,
With terror smitten, to the summit drove,
Lest any Greek should come to seize the prey.
And waste your crowded stalls : till we discovered
Voices so different from the Hellenian tribes,
That we no longer feared them. I advanced,
And in the Thracian language made inquiry
Of the king's vanguard, as they moved along
To explore a passage for the host, what name
Their leader bore, sprung from what noble sire,
To Ilion's walls he came, the friend of Priam.
When I had heard each circumstance I wished
To know, I for a time stood motionless,
And saw majestic Rhesus, like a god,
High in his chariot, drawn by Thracian steeds
Whiter than snow, a golden beam confined
Their necks, and o'er his shoulders hung a shield
Adorned with sculptures wrought in massive gold ;

Like that which in Minerva's Ægis flames,
 Bound on the courser's front, a brazen Gorgon
 Tinkled incessant with alarming sound.
 The numbers of an army so immense
 I cannot calculate; the horse were many,
 Many the ranks of troops with bucklers armed,
 And archers; and a countless multitude,
 Like infantry in Thracian vests arrayed
 Brought up the rear. Such is th' ally who comes
 On Troy's behalf to combat; nor by flight,
 Nor by withstanding his protended spear,
 Can Peleus' son escape him.

CHOR. When the gods
 Are to a realm propitious, each event
 Is easily converted into bliss.

HEC. Since I in battle prosper, and since Jove
 Is on our side, I shall have many friends;
 But those we need not who in former time
 Our toils partook not, with malignant blast
 When on the sails of Ilion Mars had breathed.
 Rhesus hath shown too plainly what a friend
 He is to Troy, for to the feast he comes,
 Yet was he absent when the hunters seized
 Their prey, nor did he share the toils of war.

CHOR. You justly scorn such friends; yet, O receive
 Those who would aid the city.

HEC. We who long
 Have guarded Ilion can defend it now.

CHOR. Are you persuaded you have gained already
 A triumph o'er the foes?

HEC. I am persuaded,
 And when to-morrow's sun the heaven ascends
 This shall be proved.

CHOR. Beware of what may happen;
 Jove oft o'erthrows the prosperous.

HEC. I abhor
 These tardy succours.

SHEP. O, my lord, 'twere odious,
 Should you reject with scorn the proffered aid
 Of our allies: the sight of such a host
 Will strike the foe with terror.

CHOR. Since he comes
 But as a guest, not partner in the war,
 Let him approach your hospitable board,
 For little thanks are due from Priam's sons
 To such confederates.

HEC. Prudent are thy counsels,
 Thou too hast rightly judged: and in compliance
 With what the messenger hath said, let Rhesus

Refulgent in his golden arms draw near,
For Ilion shall receive him as her friend.

[*Exit* SHEPHERD.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

Daughter of Jove, forbear to wreak
Impending vengeance, though the tongue,
O Nemesis, its boastful strain prolong :
I the free dictates of my soul will speak.
Thou com'st, brave son of that illustrious spring,
Thou com'st thrice welcome to our social hall :
At length doth thy Pierian mother bring
Her favoured child, while ling'ring in his fall,
Adorned by many a bridge, thee with paternal call

I. 2.

Doth Strymon summon to the field : of yore
When he the tuneful Muse addressed,
A gliding stream he sought her snowy breast,
Thee, lovely youth, the yielding goddess bore :
To us thou com'st a tutelary power
Yoking thy coursers to the fervid car :
O Phrygia ! O my country ! at this hour
Hastes thy deliverer glittering from afar,
Him may'st thou call thy Jove, thy thunderbolt of war.

II. 1.

While swiftly glides th' unheeded day,
Again shall Troy without control
Chant the young loves, and o'er the foaming bowl
The sportive contest urge 'midst banquets gay ;
But Atreus' sons desponding cross the wave,
And sail from Ilion to the Spartan strand.
Accomplish what thy friends foretold, O save
These menaced walls by thy victorious hand,
Return with laurels crowned, and bless thy native land.

II. 2.

To dazzle fierce Pelides' sight,
Before him wave thy golden shield
Obliquely raised, that meteor of the field,
Vault from thy chariot with unrivalled might,
And brandish with each dexterous hand a lance ;
Whoever strives with thee shall ne'er return
To Argive fanes, and join Saturnia's dance,
He by the spear of Thrace in combat slain,
Shall lie a breathless corse on Troy's exulting plain.

Hail, mighty chief! ye Thracian realms, the mien
 Of him ye bore speaks his exalted rank.
 Observe those nervous limbs with plated gold
 Incased, and hearken to those tinkling chains
 Which on his shield are hung. A god, O Troy,
 E'en Mars himself, from Strymon's current sprung,
 And from the Muse, brings this auspicious gale.

RHESUS, HECTOR, CHORUS.

RHE. Thou brave descendant of a noble sire,
 Lord of this realm, O Hector, I accost thee
 After a tedious absence, and rejoice
 In thy success, for to the turrets reared
 By Greece, thou now lay'st siege, and I am come
 With thee those hostile bulwarks to o'erthrow,
 And burn their fleet.

HEC. Son of the tuneful Muse,
 And Thracian Strymon's stream, I ever love
 To speak the truth, for I am not a man
 Versed in duplicity; long, long ago,
 Should you have come to succour Troy, nor suffered,
 Far as on you depended, by our foes
 This city to be ta'en. You cannot say
 That uninvited by your friends you came not,
 Because you marked not our distress. What heralds,
 What embassies to you did Phrygia send,
 Beseeching you, the city to protect,
 What sumptuous presents did she not bestow?
 But you, our kinsman, who derive your birth
 From a barbarian stem, to Greece betrayed
 Us, a barbarian nation, though from ruling
 Over a petty state, by this right arm
 I raised you to the wide-extended throne,
 When round Pangæum and Pæonia's realm
 Rushing upon the hardiest Thracian troops
 I broke their ranks of battle, and subdued
 The people to your empire: but you spurn
 My benefits, nor come with speed to succour
 Your friends in their distress. Though they who spring not
 From the same ancestors, observed our summons;
 Of whom full many in yon field of death
 Have tombs heaped o'er them, a most glorious proof
 Of faith unshaken; others under arms
 Their chariots mount, and steadfastly endure
 The wintry blasts, the parching flames of heaven,
 Nor on a gay convivial couch reclined
 Like you, O Rhesus, drain the frequent bowl.
That you may know I yet can stand alone,

Such conduct I resent ; this to your face
I speak.

RHE. I also am the same : my language
Is plain and honest ; I am not a man
Of mean duplicity. My soul was tortured
With greater anguish far than thou couldst feel,
Because I was not present in this land ;
But Scythia's tribes who near our confines dwell
Made war against me just as I to Troy
Was journeying ; I had reached the Euxine shore
To sail with Thracia's host, the Scythian blood
There stained our spears, and my brave troops expired
'Midst intermingled slaughter : this event
Hindered my reaching Troy, and aiding thee
In battle. Having conquered them, and taken
For hostages their children, them I bound
To pay me annual tribute ; with my fleet
Then crossed the Hellespont, and marched on foot
Through various realms, nor, as thou proudly say'st,
Drained the intoxicating bowl, nor slept
Beneath a gilded roof, but to such blasts
As cover with thick ice the Thracian wave,
Or through Pæonia howl, was I exposed
Wrapped in this mantle many a sleepless night.
But I, though late, am in due season come :
For this is the tenth year since thou hast waged
An ineffectual war, day after day
By thee is idly lavished, while the die
Of battle 'twixt the Argive host and thine
Spins doubtful ere it fall. But it for me
Will be sufficient that the sun once mount
The heavens, while I their bulwarks storm, invade
Their fleet, and slay the Greeks. To my own home
I the next day from Ilion will return,
Thy toils soon ending : let no Trojan bear
A shield : for with this spear will I subdue
The boasters, though 'twas late ere I arrived.

CHOR. My soul this language doth approve,
Such friends as thou art sent by Jove,
But humbly I that god beseech,
To pardon thy presumptuous speech.
The navy launched from Argos' strand,
Though freighted with a daring band,
Neither in former times, nor now
Contained a chief more brave than thou.
How shall Achilles' self withstand,
Or Ajax meet, thy vengeful hand ?
O may the morn with orient ray
Exhibit that auspicious day,

When thou the victor's prize shalt gain
And dye with crimson gore the plain.

RHE. Soon with exploits like these will I atone
For my long absence: but, with due submission
To Nemesis, I speak; when from the foe
We have delivered this beleaguered city
And seized their spoils for offerings to the gods;
With thee to Argos will I go, invade,
And ravage with victorious arms, all Greece,
To teach them in their turn what 'tis to suffer.

HEC. Could I escape from the impending stroke,
And with that safety which we erst enjoyed
These walls inhabit, I to Heaven should pay
Full many a grateful vow: but as for Argos,
As for the Grecian states, to lay them waste
By arms were far less easy than you speak of.

RHE. Is it not said the bravest chiefs of Greece
Came hither?

HEC. Them I hold not in contempt,
But long have kept at bay.

RHE. When these are slain,
We therefore each obstruction have removed.

HEC. Forbear to think of distant prospects now,
While our immediate interests lie neglected.

RHE. Art thou so tame as to endure such wrongs
Without retorting them?

HEC. While I maintain
What I possess, my empire is sufficient.
But freely take your choice, or in the left
Or the right wing, or centre of our host
Display your shield, and range your troops around.

RHE. I singly will encounter all our foes,
O Hector; but if thou esteem it base
Not to assist me when I burn their fleet,
Because thou hast already toiled so long,
Oppose me to Achilles in the front
Of battle.

HEC. We at him no spear must aim.

RHE. Yet was I told he sailed for Troy.

HEC. He sailed,

And still is here, but angry with the chiefs,
Refuses to assist them.

RHE. In the camp
Of Greece, say who is second in renown?

HEC. Ajax, I deem, and Tydeus' son are equal
To any; but most fluent in his speech,
And with sufficient fortitude inspired,
Is that Ulysses, from whom Troy hath suffered
Insults the most atrocious; for by night,

Entering Minerva's fane, he stole her image,
And bore it to the Grecian fleet : disguised
In tattered vest, that vile impostor next
Entered the gates, and cursed the Argive host,
Sent as a spy to Ilion ; having slain
The sentinels, he through the gates escaped,
And in some fraudulent scheme is ever found :
At the Thymbraean temple is he stationed
Hard by our ramparts, we in him contend
With a most grievous pest. -

RHE. The valiant man
Is never mean enough to slay his foes
By stealth, he loves to meet them face to face ;
But, as for him, the recreant chief thou nam'st,
Who lurking with a thievish purpose frames
These dark contrivances, as through the gates
I sally forth to combat, I will seize him ;
Driven through his back, my spear shall leave the miscreant
Food for the vultures, for the impious robber
Who spoils the temples of the gods deserves
No better fate.

HEC. Now choose, for it is night,
The spot for an encampment : I will show you
A separate quarter where your troops must sleep.
But mark me well, Apollo is the watchword ;
In case of an emergency, announce
This signal to the Thracian host. [Exit RHESUS.

Extend
The watch beyond the lines, and there receive
Dolon our spy, who sallied forth t' explore
The navy of our foes ; if he be safe
He, by this time, the trenches must approach. [Exit HECTOR.

CHORUS.

I.

Who comes this rampart to defend ?
The times assigned us sentinels is o'er ;
Yon fading constellation shines no more
Now the seven Pleiades the heaven ascend.
In ether view the eagle glide.
Wake ! what means this long delay ?
Rise and watch ; now dawns the day
Saw ye the moon diffuse her radiance wide ?
Aurora is at hand : but at the gate
(For Dolon sure returns) what faithful guard shall wait ?
SEMICHOR. To whom did the first watch belong ?
SEMICHOR. 'Tis said
Choræbus, son of Mygdon, is their chief.

SEMICHOR. Who in his room was stationed?
 SEMICHOR. The Pæ-nians
 Called from their tent Cilicia's hardy troops.
 SEMICHOR. The Mysians summoned us.
 SEMICHOR. Haste, let us seek
 The fifth division of the watch, and rouse
 Lycia's brave warriors as by lot ordained.

CHORUS.

II.

Hark! couched on her ill-omened nest,
 Fell murderess of her son, in varied strains
 Near Simois' banks the nightingale complains:
 What sounds melodious heave her throbbing breast!
 The flocks on Ida wont to feed
 Still browse o'er that airy height,
 Soothing the cold ear of night,
 Hark to the murmurs of the pastoral reed.
 Sleep on our closing eyelids gently steals;
 Sweet are its dews when morn her earliest dawn reveals.
 SEMICHOR. But wherefore doth not he draw near whom
 Hector
 Sent to explore the fleet?
 SEMICHOR. He hath so long
 Been absent that I tremble.
 SEMICHOR. If he fell
 Into some ambush, and is slain, we soon
 Shall have sufficient cause for fear.
 SEMICHOR. But haste,
 Rouse Lycia's warriors as by lot ordained. [*Exit* CHORUS.]

ULYSSES, DIOMEDE.

ULY. Heard'st thou, O Diomedes, the sound of arms,
 Or in these ears did empty murmurs ring?
 DIO. No; but the steely trappings which are linked
 To yonder chariots, rattled, and I too
 With vain alarm was seized, till I perceived
 The coursers, who their clanging harness shook.
 ULY. Beware, lest in this gloom of night thou stumble
 Upon the sentinels.
 DIO. Though in the dark
 We tread, I with such caution will direct
 My steps as not to err.
 ULY. But, should'st thou wake them,
 Thou know'st the watchword of their host.
 DIO. I know
 It is Apollo; this I heard from Dolon.
 ULY. Ha! I perceive our foes have left these chambers.

DIO. Here, Dolon told us, is the tent of Hector :
'Gainst him I wield this javelin.

ULY. What hath happened ?
Is the whole squadron too elsewhere removed ?

DIO. Perchance they too 'gainst us may have contrived
Some stratagem.

ULY. For Hector now is brave
Since he hath conquered.

DIO. How shall we proceed ?
For in this chamber him we cannot find,
And all our hopes are vanished.

ULY. To the fleet
Let us in haste return : for him some god
Protects, and crowns him with triumphant wreaths :
We must not strive 'gainst Fortune's dread behests.

DIO. Then to Æneas will we go, or Paris
That Phrygian most abhorred, and with our swords
Lop off their heads.

ULY. But how, in darkness wrapt,
Canst thou direct thy passage through the troops,
To slay them without danger ?

DIO. Yet 'twere base,
Back to the Grecian fleet should we return,
No fresh exploit performing 'gainst the foe.

ULY. What means this language ? hast thou not performed
A great exploit ? have we not slain the spy
Who to our navy went, and are not these
The spoils of Dolon ? how canst thou expect
To spread a general havoc through their troops ?
Comply ; let us retire : may Fortune speed
Our progress homeward.

MINERVA, ULYSSES, DIOMEDE.

MIN. With affliction stung,
Why from the Trojan camp do ye retire ?
Although the gods forbid you to destroy
Hector or Paris, heard ye not that Rhesus,
A mighty chief, with numerous troops is come
To Troy ? If he outlives this night, nor Ajax,
Nor can Achilles hinder him from wasting
The camp of Greece, demolishing your walls,
And forcing a wide passage through your gates
With his victorious spear : him slay, and all
Is yours ; but go not to the couch of Hector,
Nor hope to leave that chief a weltering trunk,
For he must perish by another hand.

ULY. Dread goddess, O Minerva, I distinguished
Thy well-known voice : for midst unnumbered toils
Thou ever dost support me : but, oh say,

Where sleeps the mighty warrior thou hast named,
And in what part of the barbarian host
Have they assigned his station?

MIN. Near at hand,
And separate from the Phrygian troops, he lies;
Hector hath placed him just without the lines
Till morn arise; conspicuous in the gloom
Of night, and close beside their sleeping lord,
Yoked to the car his Thracian coursers stand,
White as the glossy plumage of the swan:
Them bear away when ye have slain their lord,
A glorious prize, for the whole world can boast
No car beside drawn by such beauteous steeds.

ULY. Either do thou, O Diomed, transpierce
The Thracian soldiers, or to me consign
That task; meanwhile seize thou the steeds.

DIO. To slay
The foe be mine; do you the coursers guide,
For you are practised in each nicer art,
And quick of apprehension. To each man
Should that peculiar station be assigned
In which he can be useful.

MIN. But to us
Paris I see is coming, who hath heard
A doubtful rumour from the watch, that foes
Enter the trenches.

DIO. Hath he any comrade,
Or marches he alone?

MIN. Alone he seems
To go to Hector's chamber, to announce
That there are foes discovered in the camp.

DIO. Is it not first ordained that he shall die?

MIN. You can no more, the Destinies forbid:
For Hector must not perish by your hand;
But haste to him on whom ye came to wreak
Fate's dreadful purposes: myself meanwhile
Assuming Venus' form, who 'midst the toils
Of battle by her tutelary care
Protects him, will with empty words detain
Paris your foe. Thus much have I declared:
Yet he, whom you must smite, though near at hand,
Nor knows, nor hears, the words which I have uttered.
[*Exeunt ULYSSES and DIOMEDE.*]

PARIS, MINERVA.

PAR. General and brother, Hector, thee I call:
Yet sleep'st thou? doth not this important hour
Demand thy vigilance? some foes approach,
Robbers or spies.

MIN. Be of good cheer ; for Venus
Protects you : I in all your battles feel
An interest, mindful of the prize I gained
Favoured by you, and am for ever grateful :
Now to the host of Ilion I conduct
Your noble Thracian friend, who from the Muse,
Harmonious goddess, and from Strymon springs.

PAR. To Troy and me thou ever art a friend.
In thy behalf when I that judgment gave,
I boast that for this city I obtained
The greatest treasure life affords. But hither,
Hearing an indistinct account, I come ;
For 'mong the guards there hath prevailed a rumour,
That Grecian spies have entered Ilion's walls :
Though the astonished messenger who bore
These tidings, saw them not himself, nor knows
Who saw them : I on this account am going
To Hector's tent.

MIN. Fear nought ; for in the camp
No new event hath happened. To arrange
The Thracian troops is Hector gone.

PAR. Thy words
Are most persuasive, and to them I yield
Implicit credence. From all fears released,
I to my former station will return.

MIN. Go and depend upon my guardian care
To see my faithful votaries ever blest ;
For you in me shall find a zealous friend. [*Exit PARIS.*]

ULYSSES, DIOMEDE, MINERVA.

MIN. But now to you, my real friends, I speak.
Son of Laertes, O conceal your sword,
For we have slain the Thracian chief, and seized
His coursers, but our foes have ta'en th' alarm
And rush upon you, therefore fly with speed,
Fly to the naval ramparts. Why delay
To save your lives when hostile throngs approach ?
[*Exit MINERVA.*]

CHORUS, ULYSSES, DIOMEDE.

CHOR. Come on, strike, strike, destroy. Who marches
yonder ?
Look, look, 'tis him I mean ! these are the robbers
Who in the dead of night alarmed our host.
Hither, my friends, haste hither ; I have seized them.
What answer mak'st thou ? tell me whence thou cam'st,
And who thou art.

ULY. No right hast thou to know ;
Insult me, and this instant thou shalt die.

CHOR. Wilt thou not, ere this lance transpierce thy
breast,
Repeat the watchword?

ULY. That thou soon shalt hear;
Be satisfied.

1st SEMICHOR. Come on, my friends, strike! strike!

2nd SEMICHOR. Hast thou slain Rhesus?

ULY. I have slain the man
Who would have murdered thee : forbear.

1st SEMICHOR. I will not.

2nd SEMICHOR. Forbear to slay a friend.

1st SEMICHOR. Pronounce the watchword.

ULY. Apollo.

2nd SEMICHOR. Thou art right ; let not a spear
Be lifted up against him.

1st SEMICHOR. Know'st thou whither
Those men are gone ?

2nd SEMICHOR. We saw not.

1st SEMICHOR. Follow close
Their steps, or we must call aloud for aid.

2nd SEMICHOR. Yet were it most unseemly to disturb
Our valiant comrades with our nightly fears.

[*Exeunt ULYSSES and DIOMEDE.*]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

What chief is he, who moved along ;
What daring plunderer fleet and strong,
Shall boast he 'scaped my vengeful hand?
How overtake his rapid flight?

To whom compare him, who by night,
With dauntless step passed through our armed band
And slumbering guards ? doth he reside

In Thessaly, near ocean's boisterous tide
In Locris, or those islands scattered o'er
The waves ? whence comes he to this fell debate ?

What power supreme doth he adore ?

1st SEMICHOR. Was this Ulysses' enterprise, or whose ?

2nd SEMICHOR. If we may form our judgment from the past,
Who but Ulysses—

1st SEMICHOR. Think'st thou that it was ?

2nd SEMICHOR. Why not ?

1st SEMICHOR. He is an enterprising foe.

2nd SEMICHOR. What bravery ? whom do you applaud ?

1st SEMICHOR. Ulysses.

2nd SEMICHOR. Praise not the treacherous weapon of a
robber.

CHORUS.

II.

He entered Ilion once before,
 With foam his eyes were covered o'er,
 In tatters hung his squalid vest;
 He artfully concealed his sword,
 And sued for fragments from our board;
 Shorn was his head, and like a beggar dressed;
 He cursed with simulated hate
 Th' Atrides, rulers of the Grecian state.
 May just revenge his forfeit life demand:
 Would he had perished as his crimes deserve,
 Before he reached the Phrygian land.

1st SEMICHOR. Whether this deed was by Ulysses wrought
 It matters not, I shrink with fear, for Hector
 Will to us guards impute the blame.

2nd SEMICHOR. What charge
 Can he allege?

1st SEMICHOR. He will suspect.

2nd SEMICHOR. Why shrink
 With terror?

1st SEMICHOR. 'Twixt our ranks they passed.

2nd SEMICHOR. Who passed?

1st SEMICHOR. They, who this night have entered Phrygia's
 camp.

CHARIOTEER OF RHESUS, CHORUS.

CHA. Alas! intolerable stroke of fate!

1st SEMICHOR. Be silent.

2nd SEMICHOR. Rouse! for some one may have fallen
 Into the snare.

CHA. O dire calamity
 Of Troy's allies, the Thracians!

1st SEMICHOR. Who is he
 That groans?

CHA. Ah! wretched me, and O thou king
 Of Thrace, who in an evil hour beheld'st
 Accursed Ilion; what an end of life
 Was thine!

CHOR. But which of our allies art thou?
 For o'er these eyes the gloom of night is spread,
 And I discern thee not.

CHA. Where shall I find
 Some of the Trojan chiefs? beneath his shield
 O where doth Hector taste the charms of sleep?
 To which of Ilion's leaders shall I tell
 All we have suffered? and what wounds unseen

Some stranger hath on us with ruthless hand
 Inflicted? but he vanished and hath heaped
 Conspicuous sorrows on the Thracian realm.

CHOR. Some terrible disaster to the troops
 Of Thrace it seems hath happened, if aright
 I comprehend what I from him have heard.

CHA. Our host is utterly destroyed, our king
 Hath been despatched by some foul secret stroke.
 How am I tortured by a deadly wound,
 Yet know not to what cause I must impute
 My perishing! 'Twas by the Fates ordained,
 That I, and Rhesus, who to Ilion led
 Auxiliar troops, ingloriously should bleed.

CHOR. He in no riddle hath expressed the tale
 Of our misfortunes; he asserts too clearly
 That our allies are slain.

CHA. We are most wretched,
 And to our wretchedness have joined disgrace,
 A twofold evil. For, to die with glory,
 If glory must be purchased at the expense
 Of life, is very bitterness I deem
 To him who bleeds (for what can make amends
 For such a loss as life); but to the living
 Is he the source of pride, from him his house
 Derives renown. But we, alas! like fools,
 Ignobly perish. Hector in the camp
 No sooner fixed our station, and pronounced
 The watchword, than we slept upon the plain,
 O'ercome with toil; no sentinels were stationed
 To watch our troops by night, nor were our arms
 Duly arranged, and to the harnessed steeds
 Hung no alarm bell; for our monarch heard
 That ye had proved victorious, and with ruin
 Threatened the Grecian fleet. Immersed we lay
 In luckless slumber; till disturbed in mind
 I started up, and with a liberal hand
 Measured the coursers' food, resolved betimes
 To yoke them for the battle. I beheld
 Two men, who, in the midnight darkness, walked
 Around our camp; but when I moved, they fled,
 And disappeared immediately; with threats
 I bade them keep aloof: 'twas my conjecture
 That robbers, some of our own countrymen,
 Approached: they answered not, nor know I more.
 Returning to my tent, again I slept,
 And forms tremendous hovered in my dream.
 For near my royal master, as I stood,
 I saw two visionary wolves ascend
Those coursers' backs which I was wont to guide,

Oft lashing with their tails they forced them on,
Indignant breathing as they champed the bit,
And struggling with dismay ; but in attempting
To drive away these ravenous beasts, I woke,
Roused by the terrors of the night, and heard,
Soon as I raised my head, expiring groans ;
The tepid current of my master's blood,
Yet gasping in the agonies of death,
Besprinkled me. As from the couch I leaped
Unarmed, and sought for weapons, some strong warrior
Smote with his sword my ribs ; the ghastly wound
Displayed his might : prostrate I sunk to earth.
Bearing the steeds away, and glittering car,
They by the swiftness of their feet escaped,
Tortured with pain, too faint to stand, I know
Too well the dire calamity these eyes
Beheld ; but cannot say, or through what means,
Or by the hand of whom, my lord was slain :
Yet can I guess that by our friends we suffer.

CHOR. O charioteer of Thracia's wretched king,
Be well assured this deed was by our foes
Committed. For lo ! Hector's self, apprized
Of this calamity, draws near ; he feels
Such anguish as he ought for thy disasters.

HECTOR, CHARIOTEER OF RHESUS, CHORUS.

HEC. O ye accursed authors of this mischief,
How did those spies, who by the foe were sent
Thus, to your infamy, escape, and spread
Dire havoc through the host ; both as they entered
And as they left the camp ? Yet, unmolested,
Ye suffered them to pass. Who should be punished
But you ? for you, I say, were stationed here
To watch the camp ; but they without a wound
Are vanished, laughing at the Phrygian troops
For their unmanly cowardice, and me
Their leader. Be assured, by Jove I swear,
All-gracious father, or the scourge or death
Shall wait you for such guilt, else deem that Hector
Is but a thing of nought, a very coward.

CHOR. Great is, alas ! my danger, mighty prince,
The foe stole in while I to you conveyed
Those tidings, that the Greeks around their ships
Had kindled fires : through all the live-long night
These watchful eyes have ne'er been sealed by sleep.
By Simois' holy fountain I conjure you,
My royal lord, impute no blame to me,
For I am wholly guiltless. If you learn
That in my deeds or words I have offended,

Plunge me alive beneath earth's deepest vault ;
I ask no mercy.

CHA. Why dost thou upbraid
These for the guilt ? by plausible harangues
Wouldst thou impose on thy barbarian friends ;
O thou barbarian, thou the bloody deed
Didst perpetrate ; nor can our slaughtered comrades,
Nor we who linger pierced with ghastly wounds,
Admit that 'twas another. There requires
A long and subtle speech to make me think
Thou didst not basely murder thy allies,
Because the beauty of our steeds attracted
Thy admiration, and on their account
Hast thou slain those who at thy earnest prayer
Landed on Ilion's shore ; they came, they died.
With greater decency than thou observ'st,
Who dost assassinate thy friends, did Paris
The rites of hospitality infringe.
Pretend not that some Grecian came unseen
And smote us. Who subdued the Phrygian host,
Who reached our quarters unobserved by Hector ?
Thou with the Trojan army wert before us ;
But who was wounded, who among thy troops
Expired, when through their ranks as thou pretend'st
The foe to us advanced ? But I was wounded,
And they, whom a more grievous ill o'ertook,
No more behold the sun. To be explicit,
I charge no Greek : what foe could come by night
And find out Rhesus' tent, unless some god
Had told the murderers, for they sure knew nought
Of his arrival ? therefore all this mischief
Must be thy sole contrivance.

HEC. Our allies
Have long assisted us since first the Greeks
This realm invaded ; and I never heard
They to my charge imputed any crime.
Could I begin with thee ? by such desire
For beauteous steeds may I be never seized,
As to induce me to destroy my friends.
Ulysses was the author of this deed.
What Greek could have accomplished or contrived
Such an exploit, but he ? Him much I fear :
My soul is also troubled lest he light
On Dolon too, and slay him, for 'tis long
Since he went forth, nor doth he yet return.

CHA. I know not that Ulysses whom thou nam'st,
Nor did a foe inflict this ghastly wound.

HEC. Therefore retain, since thus to thee it seems,
Thy own opinion.

CHA. O my native land,
Might I but die in thee!

HEC. Thou shalt not die :
For of the dead the number is sufficient.

CHA. Reft of my lord, but whither shall I turn ?

HEC. Thou in my house shalt careful treatment find,
And healing balsams.

CHA. Shall the ruthless hands
Of murderers dress my wounds ?

HEC. He will not cease
Alleging the same charge.

CHA. Perdition seize
The author of this bloody deed ! my tongue
Has fixed no charge, as thou pretend'st, on thee ;
But Justice knows.

HEC. Conduct him to my palace
With speed, that we may 'scape his clamorous plaints.
But you must go, and to the citizens
Proclaim, acquainting Priam, and the elders
Who sit in council, first, that I direct
The bodies of the slain shall be interred
With due respect beside the public road.

[Exit CHARIOTEER, supported by one of
HECTOR'S Attendants.

CHOR. Why from the summit of exalted bliss
Into fresh woes hath some malignant god
Plunged Troy, why caused this sad reverse of fortune ?

The MUSE appears in the air, HECTOR, CHORUS.

CHOR. High o'er our heads what deity, O king,
Is hovering ? in her hands a recent corse
She bears : I shudder at the dreadful sight.

MUSE. Ye Trojans, mark me well : for I a Muse
Who by the wise am worshipped, hither come,
One of the nine famed sisters, having seen
The wretched fate of this my dearest son,
Who by the foe was slain : but he who smote
The generous youth, Ulysses, that dissembler,
At length shall suffer as his crimes deserve.

ODE.

I.

Parental anguish rends my breast,
For thee my son, my son, I grieve,
Thy mother sinks with woes oppressed.
Why didst thou take this road, why leave
Thy home, and march to Ilion's gate,
Where death did thy arrival wait ?

Oft with maternal zeal I strove
 Thy luckless courage to restrain,
 And oft thy sire opposed in vain.
 But now with ineffectual love,
 My dearest son, thee now no more,
 Thee, O my son, must I deplore.

CHOR. As far as bosoms, by no kindred ties
 United, can partake a mother's grief,
 Do I bewail thy son's untimely fate.

MUSE.

II.

On him your tenfold vengeance shed
 From Oeneus who derives his birth,
 Smite base Ulysses' perjured head,
 Ye fiends who desolate the earth ;
 Through them with agonizing pain
 I mourn my valiant offspring slain ;
 May Helen too partake their doom,
 Who from her bridal mansions fled,
 And sought th' adulterer's Phrygian bed ;
 For thou in Troy art to the tomb
 By her consigned ; and many a state
 Bewails its bravest warriors' fate.

Much while on earth, and since thy murmuring ghost
 Was plunged in Orcus' dreary mansions more,
 O offspring of Philammon, didst thou wound
 My soul : that arrogance which caused thy ruin,
 That contest with Pieria's choir, gave birth
 To this unhappy youth : for having passed
 The rapid current, with incautious step
 Approaching Strymon's genial bed, we mounted
 Pangæum's summit, for its golden mines
 Distinguished ; each melodious instrument
 Around us in full concert breathed ; our strife
 Was there decided with the Thracian minstrel ;
 That Thamyris who dared blaspheme our art,
 We of his eyes deprived. But since I bore
 Thee, O my son, through deference for my sisters,
 And for my own reputed chastity,
 Thee to the watery mansions of thy sire
 I sent ; and Strymon, to no human care,
 But to the nymphs who haunt his limpid founts,
 For nurture did consign thee ; from those virgins
 When, O my dearest son, thou hadst received
 The best of educations, thou becam'st
Monarch of Thrace, the first of men. I felt

No boding apprehensions of thy death ;
 By thee, while marshalled on thy native ground,
 Athirst for blood the dauntless squadrons moved.
 But thee I cautioned, for I knew thy fate,
 That thou to Troy shouldst never go ; but thee
 Th' ambassadors of Hector and the Senate,
 By oft repeated messages, persuaded
 To come to the assistance of thy friends.
 Yet think not, O Minerva, thou sole cause
 Of my son's fate, that thou these watchful eyes
 Hast 'scaped ; Ulysses and the son of Tydeus
 Were not the authors of this bloody deed,
 Although they gave the wound. We sister Muses
 Honour thy city, in thy land we dwell.
 Orpheus, the kinsman of this hapless youth
 Whom thou hast slain, dark mysteries did unfold ;
 And by Apollo, and our sister choir,
 Thy venerable citizen Musæus
 Was taught to soar beyond each warbled strain
 Of pristine melody : but in return
 For all these favours, bearing in my arms
 My son, I utter this funereal dirge ;
 But I no other minstrel will employ.

CHOR. Falsely the wounded Thracian charioteer
 Charged us with a conspiracy to slay him.

HEC. Full well I knew, there needed not a seer
 T' inform me, that he perished by the arts
 Of Ithacus. But was it not my duty
 When I my country saw by Grecian troops
 Besieged, to send forth heralds to my friends,
 Requesting them to aid us ? I did send,
 And Rhesus came, by gratitude constrained,
 Illustrious partner of my toils. His death
 Lamenting, will I raise a tomb to grace
 The corse of my ally, and o'er the flame
 Strew tissue'd vests : for with confederate arms
 Dauntless he came, though piteous was his death.

MUSE. They shall not plunge him in the yawning grave,
 Such vows will I address to Pluto's bride,
 Daughter of fruitful Ceres, to release
 His ghost from the drear shades beneath : she owes
 To Orpheus' friends such honours. But henceforth,
 Dead as it were to me, will he no more
 Behold the sun, we ne'er must meet again,
 Nor shall he see his mother, but shall lie
 Concealed beneath the caverns of that land
 With silver mines abounding, from a man
 Exalted to a god, restored to life,
 The priest of Bacchus, and of him who dwells

Beneath Pangeum's rock, a god adored
 By those who haunt his orgies. But ere long
 To yonder goddess of the briny waves
 Shall I bear doleful tidings : for by fate
 It is decreed, her offspring too shall die ;
 But first our sisterhood, in choral plaints,
 Will sing of thee, O Rhesus, and hereafter
 Achilles, son of Thetis, shall demand
 Our elegiac strains, not she who slew
 Thee, hapless youth, Minerva, can redeem him ;
 Such an inevitable shaft is stored
 In Phœbus' quiver. O ye pangs that rend
 A mother's breast, ye toils the lot of man ;
 They who behold you in your real light
 Will live without a progeny, nor mourn
 With hopeless anguish o'er their children's tomb.

[*Exit the MUSE.*]

CHOR. To bury the deceased with honours due,
 Will be his mother's care : but if, O Hector,
 Thou mean'st to execute some great emprise,
 'Tis now the time : for morn already dawns.

HEC. Go, and this instant bid our comrades arm,
 Harness the steeds : but while ye in these toils
 Are busied, ye the signal must await,
 Th' Etrurian trumpet's clangour ; for I trust
 I first shall o'er the Grecian host prevail,
 Shall storm their ramparts, and then burn their fleet,
 And that Hyperion's orient beams will bring
 A day of freedom to Troy's valiant race.

CHOR. Obey the monarch : clad in glittering mail
 Let us go forth, and his behests proclaim
 To our associates ; for that god who fights
 Our battles, haply will bestow success.

THE TROJAN CAPTIVES.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

NEPTUNE.
MINERVA.
HECUBA.
CHORUS OF CAPTIVE
TROJAN DAMES.

TALTHYBIUS.
CASSANDRA.
ANDROMACHE.
MENELAUS.
HELEN.

SCENE.—BEFORE THE ENTRANCE OF AGAMEMNON'S TENT
IN THE GRECIAN CAMP NEAR TROY.

NEPTUNE.

FROM the Ægean deep, in mazy dance
Where Nereus' daughters glide with agile feet,
I Neptune hither come. For round the fields
Of Ilion, since Apollo and myself
With symmetry exact reared many a tower
Hewn from the solid rock ; the love I bore
The city where my Phrygian votaries dwelt,
Laid waste by Greece, where smoke e'en now ascends
The heavens, hath ne'er been rooted from this breast,
For on Parnassus bred, the Phocian chief
Epeus, by Minerva's arts inspired,
Framed with a skilful hand, and through the gates
Sent that accursed machine, the horse which teemed
With ambushed javelins. Through forsaken groves,
Through the polluted temples of the gods,
Flow tides of crimson slaughter ; at the base
Of altars sacred to Hercæan Jove,
Fell hoary Priam. But huge heaps of gold
And Phrygian plunder, to the fleet of Greece
Are sent : the leaders of the host that sacked
This city, wait but for a prosperous breeze,
That after ten years absence they their wives
And children may with joy behold. Subdued
By Juno, Argive goddess, and Minerva,
Who leagued in Phrygia's overthrow, I leave

Troy the renowned, and my demolished shrines.
 For when pernicious solitude extends
 O'er cities her inexorable sway,
 Abandoned are the temples of the gods,
 None comes to worship there. Scamander's banks
 Re-echo many a shriek of captive dames
 Distributed by lot; th' Arcadians, some,
 Some the Thessalians gain, and some the sons
 Of Theseus leaders of th' Athenian troops :
 But they whom chance distributes not, remain
 Beneath yon roof selected by the chiefs
 Of the confederate army. Justly deemed
 A captive, among them is Spartan Helen :
 And if the stranger wishes to behold
 That wretched woman, Hecuba lies stretched
 Before the gate, full many are her tears,
 And her afflictions many : at the tomb
 Of stern Achilles her unhappy daughter
 Polyxena died wretchedly, her lord
 The royal Priam, and her sons are slain,
 That spotless virgin too whom from his shrine
 Apollo with prophetic gifts inspired,
 Cassandra, spurning every sacred rite,
 Did Agamemnon violently drag
 To his adulterous bed. But, O farewell,
 Thou city prosperous once ; ye splendid towers,
 Had not Minerva's self ordained your fall,
 Ye still on your firm basis might remain.

MINERVA, NEPTUNE.

MIN. May I accost the god who to my sire
 In blood is nearest, mighty, through high Heaven
 Revered, and lay aside our ancient hate?

NEP. 'Tis well, thou royal maid : an interview
 'Twixt those of the same house, is to the soul
 An efficacious philtre.

MIN. I applaud
 Those who are temperate in their wrath, and bring
 Such arguments, O monarch, as affect
 Both you and me.

NEP. From all th' assembled gods
 Some new commission bear'st thou, or from Jove,
 Or what celestial power?

MIN. From none of these.
 But in the cause of Troy, whose fields we tread,
 I to your aid betake me, and would join
 Our common strength.

NEP. Hast thou then laid aside

Thy former hate, to pity Troy, consumed
By the relentless flames?

MIN. First, thither turn
Your views : to me will you unfold your counsels,
And aid the schemes I would effect?

NEP. With joy :
But I meanwhile would thy designs explore,
Whether thou com'st on the behalf of Greece,
Or Troy.

MIN. The Trojans, erst my foes, I wish
To cheer, and to embitter the return
Of the victorious Grecian host.

NEP. What means
This change of temper? to excess thou hat'st
And lov'st at random.

MIN. Know you not the insult
Which hath been shown to me, and to my temple?

NEP. I know that Ajax violently tore
Cassandra thence.

MIN. Yet by the Greeks unpunished
He 'scaped, and e'en uncensured.

NEP. Though the Greeks
O'erthrew Troy's walls through thy auxiliar might—

MIN. And for this very cause will I conspire
With you to punish them.

NEP. I am prepared
For any enterprise thou wilt. What mean'st thou?

MIN. Their journey home I am resolved to make
Most inauspicious.

NEP. While they yet remain
Upon the shore, or 'midst the briny waves?

MIN. As to their homes from Ilion's coast they sail.
For Jove will send down rain, immoderate hail,

And pitchy blasts of air : he promises
To give me too his thunderbolts to smite
The Greeks and fire their ships ; but join your aid,
Cause the Ægean deep with threefold waves,
And ocean's whirlpools horribly to rage,
Fill with their courses the unfathomed caves
Beneath Eubœa's rocks, that Greece may learn
My shrines to reverence, nor provoke the gods.

NEP. It shall be done : there need not many words
To recommend thy suit. My storms shall rouse
Th' Ægean deep ; the shores of Myconè,
Scyros with Lemnos, all the Delian rocks,
And steep Caphareus with full many a corse
Will I o'erspread. But mount Olympus' height,
And from the Thunderer's hand his flaming shafts
Receiving, mark when the devoted host

Of Greece weigh anchor. Frantic is the man
 Who dares to lay the peopled city waste,
 Temples with tombs profaning, and bereaves
 Of their inhabitants those sacred vaults
 Where sleep the dead ; at length shall vengeance smite
 That hardened miscreant in his bold career. [*Exeunt.*]

The Scene opens, and discovers HECUBA on a couch.

HEC. Arise, thou wretch, and from the dust uplift
 Thy drooping head ; though Ilium be no more,
 And thou a queen no longer, yet endure
 With patience Fortune's change, and as the tide
 Or as capricious Fortune wills, direct
 Thy sails, nor turn against the dashing wave
 Life's stubborn prow, for chance must guide thy voyage.
 Alas ! for what but groans belongs to me
 Whose country, children, husband, are no more ?
 Oh, mighty splendour of my sires, now pent
 In a small tomb, how art thou found a thing
 Of no account ! What portion of my woes
 Shall I suppress, or what describe, how frame
 A plaintive strain ? Now fixed on this hard couch,
 Wretch that I am, are my unwieldy limbs.
 Ah me ! my head, my temples, ah, my side !
 Oh, how I wish to turn, and to stretch forth
 These joints ! My tears shall never cease to flow,
 For like the Muse's lyre, th' affecting tale
 Of their calamities consoles the wretched.
 Ye prows of those swift barks which to the coast
 Of fated Ilium, from the Grecian ports
 Adventurous launched amid the purple wave,
 Accompanied by inauspicious pæans
 From pipes, and the shrill flute's enlivening voice,
 While from the mast devolved the twisted cordage
 By Egypt first devised, ye to the bay
 Of Troy did follow Menelaus' wife,
 Helen, abhorred adult'ress, who disgraced
 Castor her brother, and Eurotas' stream :
 She murdered Priam, sire of fifty sons,
 And me the wretched Hecuba hath plunged
 Into this misery. Here, alas ! I sit
 In my loathed prison, Agamemnon's tent ;
 From princely mansions dragged, an aged slave,
 My hoary tresses shorn, this head deformed
 With baldness. But, alas ! ye hapless wives
 Of Ilium's dauntless warriors, blooming maids,
 And brides affianced in an evil hour,
 Together let us weep, for Ilium's smoke
 Ascends the skies. Like the maternal bird,

Who wails her callow brood, I now commence
A strain far different from what erst was heard
When I on mighty Priam's sceptred state
Proudly relying, led the Phrygian dance
Before the hallowed temples of the gods.

[She rises, and comes forth from the tent.]

SEMICHORUS, HECUBA.

SEMICHOR. O Hecuba, what mean these clamorous notes,
These shrieks of woe? for from the vaulted roof
Thy plaints re-echoing smite my distant ear,
And fresh alarms seize every Phrygian dame
Who in these tents enslaved deplores her fate.

HEC. E'en now, my daughter, at the Grecian fleet
Th' exulting sailors ply their oars.

SEMICHOR. Ah me!

What mean they? will they instantly convey me
Far from my ruined country?

HEC. By conjecture

Alone am I acquainted with our doom.

SEMICHOR. Soon shall we hear this sentence: "From
these doors

Come forth ye Trojan captives, for the Greeks
Are now preparing to return."

HEC. O cease,

My friends, nor from her chambers hither bring
Cassandra, frantic prophetess, defiled
By Argive ruffians, for the sight of her
Would but increase my griefs.

SEMICHOR.

Troy, wretched Troy,

Thou art no more, they to whom fate ordains
No longer on thy fostering soil to dwell
Are wretched, both the living and the slain.

CHORUS, HECUBA.

CHOR. Trembling I come from Agamemnon's tent,
Of thee my royal mistress to inquire
Whether the Greeks have doomed me to be slain,
And whether yet along the poop arranged
The mariners prepare to ply their oars.

HEC. Deprived of sleep through horror, O my daughter,
I hither came: but on the road I see
A Grecian herald.

CHOR.

Tell me to what lord

Am wretched I consigned.

HEC.

E'en now the lot

Is casting to decide your fate.

CHOR.

What chief

To Argos, or to Phthia, me shall bear,
Or to some island, sorrowing, far from Troy?

HEC. To whom shall wretched I, and in what land
 Become a slave, decrepit like the drone
 Through age, mere semblance of a pallid corpse,
 Or flitting spectre from the realms beneath?
 Shall I be stationed or to watch the door,
 Or tend the children of a haughty lord,
 Erst placed at Troy in rank supreme?

CHOR.

Alas!

HEC. With what loud complaints dost thou revive thy woes!

CHOR. I never more through Ida's loom shall dart
 The shuttle, nor behold a blooming race
 Of children, in those lighter tasks employed,
 Which suit the young and beauteous, to the couch
 Of some illustrious Greek conveyed, the joys
 Which night and fortune yields are lost to me;
 Or filled with water, from Pirene's spring
 Shall I be doomed to bear the ponderous urn.

HEC. O could we reach the famed and happy realm
 Of Theseus, distant from Eurotas' tide,
 And curst Therapne's gates, where I should meet
 Perfidious Helen, and remain a slave
 To Menelaus, who demolished Troy.

CHOR. By fame's loud voice I am informed, the vale
 Of Peneus, at Olympus base, abounds
 With wealth and plenteous fruitage.

HEC.

This I make

My second option, next the blest domain
 Of Theseus.

CHOR. I am told that Vulcan's realm
 Of Ætna, opposite Phœnicia's coast
 The mother of Sicilian hills, is famed
 For palms obtained by valour. Through the realm
 Adjacent, bordering on th' Ionian deep,
 Crathis the bright, for auburn hair renowned,
 The tribute of its holy current pours,
 And scatters blessings o'er a martial land.
 But lo, with hasty step a herald comes
 Bearing some message from the Grecian host!
 What is his errand? for we now are slaves
 To yon proud rulers of the Doric realm.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TAL. O Hecuba, full oft, you know, to Troy
 I, as their herald, by the Grecian host
 Have been despatched; you cannot be a stranger
 To me, Talthybius, who to you, and all,
 One message bring.

HEC.

This, this, my dearest friends,
 Is what I long have feared.

TAL. The lots are cast
Already, if your terrors thence arose.
HEC. Alas, to what Thessalian city saidst thou,
Or to the Phthian, or the Theban realm
Shall we be carried?

TAL. To a separate lord
Hath each of you distinctly been assigned.
HEC. To whom, alas, to whom am I allotted?
What Phrygian dames do happier fortunes wait?

TAL. I know; but be distinct in your inquiries,
Nor ask at once a multitude of questions.

HEC. Say who by lot hath gained my wretched daughter
Cassandra?

TAL. Her the royal Agamemnon
His chosen prize hath taken.

HEC. As a slave
To tend his Spartan wife? ah, me!

TAL. No slave,
But concubine.

HEC. What, Phœbus' votive maid,
To whom the god with golden tresses gave
This privilege, that she should pass her life
In celibacy?

TAL. With the shafts of love
Hath the prophetic nymph transpierced his breast.

HEC. My daughter, cast the sacred keys away,
And rend the garlands thou with pride didst wear.

TAL. Is it not great for captives to ascend
The regal couch?

HEC. But where is she whom late
Ye took away, and whither have ye borne
That daughter?

TAL. Speak you of Polyxena,
Or for whom else would you inquire?

HEC. On whom
Hath chance bestowed her?

TAL. At Achilles' tomb
It is decreed that she shall minister.

HEC. Wretch that I am! for his sepulchral rites
Have I then borne a priestess? but what law
Is this, what Grecian usage, O my friend?

TAL. Esteem your daughter happy; for with her
All now is well.

HEC. What saidst thou? doth she live?

TAL. 'Tis her peculiar fate to be released
From all affliction.

HEC. But, alas! what fortune
Attends the warlike Hector's captive wife,
How fares it with the lost Andromache?

TAL. Her to Achilles' son hath from the band
Of captives chosen.

HEC. As to me who need
For a third foot, the staff which in these hands
I hold, whose head is whitened o'er with age,
To whom am I a slave?

TAL. By lot the king
Of Ithaca Ulysses hath obtained you.

HEC. Alas! alas! let your shorn temples feel
The frequent blow; rend your discoloured cheeks.
Ah me! I am allotted for a slave
To a detestable and treacherous man,
Sworn foe of justice, to that lawless viper,
With double tongue confounding all, 'twixt friends
Exciting bitter hate. Ye Trojan dames,
O shed the sympathizing tear: I sink
Beneath the pressure of relentless fate.

CHOR. Thy doom, O queen, thou know'st: but to what chief,
Hellenian or Achaian, I belong
Inform me.

TAL. Peace! Conduct Cassandra hither
With speed, ye guards, into our general's hands
When I his captive have delivered up,
That we the rest may portion out. Why gleams
That blazing torch within? would Ilion's dames
Their chambers fire? what mean they? doomed to leave
This land, and to be borne to Argive shores,
Are they resolved to perish in the flames?
The soul, inspired with an unbounded love
Of freedom, ill sustains such woes. Burst open
The doors, lest, to their honour and the shame
Of Greece, on me the censure fall.

HEC. They kindle
No conflagration, but, with frantic step,
My daughter, lo! Cassandra rushes hither.

CASSANDRA, TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

CAS. Avaunt! the sacred flame I bring
With reverential awe profound,
And wave the kindled torch around,
O Hymen, thou benignant king.
The bridegroom comes with jocund pride,
I too am styled a happy bride,
My name through Argos' streets shall ring,
O Hymen, thou benignant king!
While thou attend'st my father's bier,
O Hecuba, with many a tear,
While Ilion's ramparts overthrown
From thee demand th' incessant groan,

Ere the bright sun withhold his ray,
 E'en in the glaring front of day,
 I bid the nuptial incense blaze
 To thee, O Hymen, thee whose power
 Invoking at her bridal hour
 The bashful virgin comes. Yon maze
 Encircling, 'mid the choral dance,
 As ancient usage bids, advance,
 And in thy hand a flaming pine,
 O mother, brandish. God of wine,
 Thy shouting votaries hither bring,
 As if in Ilion thou hadst found
 Old Priam still a happy king.
 Range that holy group around,
 O Phœbus, in thy laureate mead,
 Thy temple, shall the victim bleed.
 Let Hymen, Hymen, Hymen, sound.
 My mother, for the dance prepare,
 Vault nimbly, and our revels share.
 At Hymen's shrine, my friends, prolong
 Your vows, awake th' ecstatic song ;
 In honour of my bridal day,
 Chant, Phrygian nymphs, the choral lay,
 And celebrate the chief whom fate
 Ordains to be Cassandra's mate.

CHOR. Wilt thou not stop the princess, lest she rush
 With frantic step amid the Grecian host ?

HÆC. O Vulcan, wont to light the bridal torch,
 Now dost thou brandish an accursed flame ;
 My soul foresaw not this. Alas ! my daughter,
 I little thought, that 'midst the din of arms,
 Or while we crouch beneath the Argive spear,
 Thou couldst have celebrated such espousals.
 Give me the torch, for while with frantic speed
 Thou rushest on, it trembles in thy hand.
 Nor yet have thy afflictions, O my daughter,
 Brought back thy wandering reason, thou remain'st
 Disordered as before. Ye Trojan dames,
 Remove yon blazing pines, and in the stead
 Of these her bridal songs let tears express
 The anguish of your souls.

CAS. O mother, place
 A laureate wreath on my victorious brow,
 Exulting lead me to the monarch's bed.
 And if for thee too slowly I advance,
 Drag me along by force ; for I am now
 No more the spouse of Phœbus ; but that king
 Of Greece, famed Agamemnon, shall in me
 Take to his arms a bride more inauspicious

Than even Helen's self: him will I smite,
And lay his palace waste, in great revenge
For my slain sire and brothers. But I cease
These menaces, and speak not of the axe
Which shall smite me and others, or the conflict
My wedlock shall produce, whence by the hands
Of her own son a mother shall be slain,
And th' overthrow of Atreus' guilty house.
This city will I prove to have been happier
Than the victorious Greeks (for though the gods
Inspire, I curb the transports of my soul),
Who for one single woman, to regain
The beauteous Helen only, wasted lives
Unnumbered. Their wise leader, in the cause
Of those he hated, slew whom most he loved;
He to his brother yielded up his daughter,
Joy of his house, for that vile woman's sake,
Who with her own consent, and not by force,
Was borne away. But at Scamander's banks
When they arrived, they died, though not by exile
Torn from their country, or their native towers:
But them who in embattled fields were slain
Their children saw not, nor in decent shroud
Were they enwrapped by their loved consorts' hands,
But lie deserted on a foreign coast:
Their sorrows also who remained at home
Are similar; in widowhood forlorn
Some die; and others, of their own brave sons
Deprived, breed up the children of a stranger;
Nor at their slighted tombs is blood poured forth
To drench the thirsty ground. Their host deserves
Praises like these. 'Tis better not to speak
Of what is infamous, nor shall my Muse
Record the shameful tale. But, first and greatest
Of glories, in their country's cause expired
The Trojans; the remains of those who fell
In battle, by their friends borne home, obtained
Sepulchral honours in their native soil,
That duteous office kindred hands performed:
While every Phrygian who escaped the sword
Still with his wife and children did reside,
Joy to the Greeks unknown. Now hear the fate
Of Hector, him whom thou bewail'st, esteemed
The bravest of our heroes, by the Greeks
Landing on Ilion's coast the warrior fell;
In their own country had the foe remained,
His valour ne'er had been displayed: but Paris
Wedded the daughter of imperial Jove,
In her possessing an illustrious bride.

It is the wise man's duty to avoid
 Perilous war. After the die is cast,
 He who undaunted meets the fatal stroke,
 Adds to his native city fair renown ;
 But the last moments of a coward shame
 The land which gave him birth. Forbear to weep,
 My mother, for thy ruined country's fate ;
 Weep not because thou seest thy daughter borne
 To Agamemnon's bed, for by these spousals
 Our most inveterate foes shall I destroy.

CHOR. How sweetly 'midst the sorrows of thy house
 Thou smil'st ! ere long perchance wilt thou afford
 A melancholy instance that thy strains
 Are void of truth.

TAL. Had not Apollo fired
 E'en to distraction thy perverted soul,
 Thou on my honoured leader, ere he quit
 The shores of Ilion, shouldst not unavenged
 Pour forth these omens. But, alas ! the great,
 And they who in th' opinion of mankind
 Are wise, in no respect excel the vulgar.
 For the dread chieftain of the Grecian host,
 The son of Atreus, loves with boundless passion
 This damsel frantic as the Mænades.
 Myself am poor, yet would not I accept
 A wife like her. Since thou hast lost thy reason,
 I to the winds consign thy bitter taunts
 'Gainst Argos, with the praises thou bestow'st
 On Troy. Thou bride of Agamemnon, come,
 Follow me to the fleet. But when Ulysses
 Would bear you hence, O Hecuba, obey
 The summons, you are destined to attend
 A queen called virtuous by all those who come
 To Ilion.

CAS. Arrogant, detested slave !
 All heralds are like thee, the public scorn,
 Crouching with abject deference to some king
 Or city. Say'st thou, "To Ulysses' house
 My mother shall be borne ?" Of what account
 Were then the oracles Apollo gave
 Uttered by me his priestess, which declare,
 "She here shall die ?" I spare the shameful tale.
 He knows not, the unhappy Ithacus,
 What evils yet await him, in the tears
 Of me and every captive Phrygian maid,
 While he exults, and deems our misery gain.
 Ten more long years elapsed beyond the term
 Spent in besieging Ilion, he alone
 Shall reach his country ; witness thou who dwell'st

'Midst ocean's straits tempestuous, dire Charybdis,
 Ye mountains where on human victims feast
 The Cyclops, with Ligurian Circe's isle,
 Whose wand transforms to swine, the billowy deep,
 Covered with shipwrecks, the bewitching Lotus,
 The sacred Oxen of the Sun, whose flesh
 Destined to utter a tremendous voice
 The banquet shall embitter : he at length,
 In a few words his history to comprise,
 Alive must travel to the shades beneath,
 And hardly 'scaping from a watery grave
 In his own house find evils numberless.
 But why do I recount Ulysses' toils ?
 Lead on, that I the sooner in the realms
 Of Pluto, with that bridegroom may consummate
 My nuptials. Ruthless miscreant as thou art,
 Thou in the tomb ignobly shalt be plunged
 At midnight ; nor shall the auspicious beams
 Of day illumine thy funereal rites,
 O leader of the Grecian host, who deem'st
 That thou a mighty conquest hast achieved.
 Near to my lord's remains, and in that vale,
 Where down a precipice the torrent foams,
 My corse shall to the hungry wolves be thrown,
 The corse of Phœbus' priestess. O ye wreaths
 Of him whom best of all the gods I loved,
 Adieu, ye symbols of my holy office,
 I leave those feasts the scenes of past delight,
 Torn from my brows avaunt, for I retain
 My chastity unsullied still ; the winds
 To thee shall waft them, O prophetic king.
 Where is your general's bark, which I am doomed
 T' ascend ? the rising breezes shall unfurl
 Your sails this instant ; for in me ye bear
 One of the three Eumenides from Troy.
 Farewell, my mother, weep not for my fate,
 O my dear country, my heroic brothers,
 And aged father, in the realms beneath,
 Ere long shall ye receive me : but victorious
 Will I descend among the mighty dead,
 When I have laid th' accursed mansions waste
 Of our destroyers, Atreus' impious sons.

[*Exeunt* CASSANDRA and TALTHYBIUS.]

CHOR. Attendants of the aged Hecuba,
 Behold ye not your mistress, how she falls
 Upon the pavement speechless ? Why neglect
 To prop her sinking frame ! Ye slothful nymphs,
 Raise up this woman, whom a weight of years
 Bows to the dust.

HEC. Away, and on this spot
Allow me, courteous damsels, to remain :
No longer welcome as in happier days
Are your kind offices ; this humble posture,
This fall best suits my present lowly state,
Best suits what I already have endured
And still am doomed to suffer. O ye gods,
In you I call upon no firm allies,
Yet sure 'tis decent to invoke the gods
When we by adverse fortune are oppress'd.
First, therefore, all the blessings I enjoyed
Would I recount, hence shall my woes demand
The greater pity. Born to regal state,
And with a mighty king in wedlock joined,
A race of valiant sons did I produce ;
I speak not of their numbers, but the noblest
Among the Phrygian youths, such as no Trojan,
Nor Grecian, nor barbarian dame could boast :
Them saw I fall beneath the hostile spear,
And at their tomb these tresses cut : their sire,
The venerable Priam, I bewailed not,
From being told of his calamitous fate
By others, but these eyes beheld him slain,
E'en at the altar of Hercæan Jove,
And Ilion taken. I those blooming maids
Have also lost, whom with maternal love
I nurtured for some noble husband's bed ;
They from these arms are torn : nor can I hope
Or to be seen by them, or e'er to see
My children more. But last of all, to crown
My woes, an aged slave, shall I be borne
To Greece ; and in such tasks will they employ me
As are most grievous in the wane of life ;
Me, who am Hector's mother, at the door
Stationed to keep the keys, or knead the bread,
And on the pavement stretch my withered limbs,
Which erst repos'd upon a regal couch,
And in such tattered vestments, as belie
My former rank, enwrap my wasted frame.
Wretch that I am, who, through one woman's nuptials,
Have borne, and am hereafter doomed to bear,
Such dreadful ills. O my unhappy daughter,
Cassandra, whom the gods have rendered frantic,
With what sad omens hath thy virgin zone
Been loosed ! and where, Polyxena, art thou,
O virgin most unfortunate ? but none
Of all my numerous progeny, or male
Or female, comes to aid their wretched mother.
Why, therefore, would ye lift me up ? what room

Is there for hope? me who with tender foot
 Paced through the streets of Troy, but now a slave,
 Drag from the palace to the rushy mat
 And stony pillow, that where'er I fall
 There may I die, through many, many tears
 Exhausted. Of the prosperous and the great
 Pronounce none happy till the hour of death.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Prepare, O Muse, prepare a song
 Expressive of the fall of Troy;
 The sympathetic dirge prolong
 And banish every note of joy.
 I with loud voice of Ilion's fate will speak,
 Sing how the foe our ramparts stormed
 Through the machine their treachery formed,
 The vehicle of many a daring Greek,
 Who burst like thunder from that wooden steed,
 With gorgeous trappings graced, in mimic state,
 Concealing armed bands, which passed the Scæan gate,
 They whom such semblance could mislead,
 The unsuspecting crowd,
 As on Troy's citadel they stood,
 Exclaimed; "Henceforth our toils shall cease,
 Come on, and to Minerva's fane convey
 This holy image, pledge of peace."
 What veteran paused? what youth but led the way?
 Enlivening songs breathed round in notes so sweet,
 That gladly they received the pestilential cheat.

II.

Then did all Phrygia's race combine
 Through their devoted gates to bear,
 Enclosed in the stupendous pine
 The fraud of Greece, that latent snare,
 To glut Minerva with Dardanian blood,
 To pacify th' immortal maid,
 They the huge mass with ropes conveyed:
 Thus the tall bark, into the briny flood
 Too ponderous to be borne, is rolled along:
 Till they had lodged it in th' ill-omened fane
 Of her to whom we owe our ruined country's bane.
 After their toil and festive song,
 The cloud-wrapped evening spread
 Her veil o'er each devoted head,
 Shrill Phrygian voices did resound,

And Libya's flutes accompanied the choir,
 While nymphs high vaulting from the ground,
 Mixed their applauses with the chorded lyre,
 And from each hearth the flames with radiance bright,
 While heedless warriors slept, dispelled the shades of night.

III.

Then o'er the genial board, to her who reigns
 In woodland heights, Diana, child of Jove,
 I waked the choral strains.
 But soon there flew a dismal sound
 Pergamus' wide streets around:
 The shrieking infant fondly strove
 To grasp the border of a mother's vest,
 And with uplifted hands its little fears expressed:
 Mars from his ambush by Minerva's aid
 Conspicuous issued and the fray began,
 Thick gore adown our altars ran,
 And many a slaughtered youth was laid
 A headless trunk on the disfigured bed,
 That Greece might shine with laureate wreaths arrayed,
 By Troy while fruitless tears are shed.

ANDROMACHE, HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Seest thou, Andromache, O queen, this way
 Advancing, wafted in a foreign car?
 Eager to cling to the maternal breast
 Close follows her beloved Astyanax,
 The son of Hector.

HEC. Whither art thou borne,
 O wretched woman, on a chariot placed
 'Midst Hector's brazen armour, and those spoils
 From captive Phrygian chiefs in combat torn,
 With which Achilles' son from Ilion's siege
 Triumphant, will the Phthian temples grace?

AND. Our Grecian masters drag me hence.

HEC.

Alas!

AND. Why with your groans my anguish strive t' assuage?

HEC. Oh!

AND. I by griefs am compassed—

HEC.

Mighty Jove!

AND. And dread vicissitudes of fate.

HEC.

My children.

AND. We once were blest.

HEC. Now are those prosperous days
 No more; and Ilion is no more.

AND.

Most wretched!

HEC. My noble sons.

AND.

Alas!

HEC. Alas my— Woes.
AND.

HEC. O piteous fortune—
AND. Of the city—
HEC. Wrapt

In smoke.

AND. Return, my husband, O return,

HEC. In clamorous accents thou invok'st my son,
Whom Pluto's realms detain, unhappy woman.

AND. Thy consort's tutelary power.

HEC. And thou,

Whose courage long withstood the Grecian host,
Thou aged father of our numerous race,
Lead me, O Priam, to the shades beneath.

AND. Presumptuous are such wishes.

HEC. We endure

These grievous woes.

CHOR. While ruin overwhelms

Our city, for on sorrows have been heaped
Fresh sorrows, through the will of angry Heaven,
Since in an evil hour thy son was snatched
From Pluto, who, determined to avenge
Those execrable nuptials, with the ground
Hath levelled Pergamus' beleaguered towers.
Near Pallas' shrine the corpses of the slain
Weltering in gore to vultures lie exposed,
And Ilion droops beneath the servile yoke.
Thee, O my wretched country, I with tears
Forsake: e'en now thou view'st the piteous end
Of all thy woes, and my loved native house.

HEC. My children! O my desolated city!
Your mother is bereft of every joy.

CHOR. What shrieks, what plaints resound! what
floods of tears

Stream in our houses! but the dead forget
Their sorrows, and for ever cease to weep.

HEC. To those who suffer, what a sweet relief
Do tears afford! the sympathetic Muse
Inspires their plaints.

AND. O mother of that chief,
Whose forceful javelin thinned the ranks of Greece,
Illustrious Hector, seest thou this?

HEC. I see
The gods delight in raising up the low,
And ruining the great.

AND. Hence with my son,
A captive am I hurried; noble birth
Subject to these vicissitudes now sinks
Into degrading slavery.

HEC. **Uncontrolled**
The power of fate : Cassandra from these arms
But now with brutal violence was torn !

AND. A second Ajax to thy daughter seems
To have appeared. Yet hast thou other griefs.

HEC. All bounds, all numbers they exceed; with ills
Fresh ills as for pre-eminence contend.

AND. Polyxena, thy daughter, at the tomb
Of Peleus' son hath breathed her last, a gift
To the deceased.

HEC. Wretch that I am, alas !
Too clearly now I understand the riddle
Which in obscurer terms Talthybius uttered.

AND, I saw her bleed, and lighting from this car
Covered her with the decent shroud and wailed
O'er her remains.

HEC. Alas ! alas ! my child
To bloody altars dragged by impious hands,
Alas ! alas ! how basely wert thou slain !

AND. Most dreadfully she perished ; yet her lot
Who perished is more enviable than mine.

HEC. Far different, O my daughter, is the state
Of them who live, from them who breathe no more :
For the deceased are nothing : but fair hope,
While life remains, can never be extinct.

AND. Thou whom, although I sprung not from thy womb,
I deem a mother, to my cheering words
With patience listen, they will yield delight
To thy afflicted soul. 'Tis the same thing
Ne'er to be born, or die; but better far
To die, than to live wretched : for no sorrow
Affects th' unconscious tenant of the grave.
But he who once was happy, he who falls
From fortune's summit down the vale of woe,
With an afflicted spirit wanders o'er
The scenes of past delight. In the cold grave,
Like one who never saw the blessed sun,
Polyxena remembers not her woes.
But I who aimed the dextrous shaft, and gained
An ample portion of renown, have missed
The mark of happiness. In Hector's house
I acted as behoves each virtuous dame.
First, whether sland'rous tongues assail or spare
The matron's chastity, an evil name,
Her who remains not at her home, pursues :
Such vain desires I therefore quelled, I stayed
In my own chamber, a domestic life
Preferring, and forbore to introduce
Vain sentimental language, such as gains

Too oft the ear of woman : 'twas enough
 For me to yield obedience to the voice
 Of virtue, that best monitor. My lord
 With placid aspect and a silent tongue
 I still received, for I that province knew
 In which I ought to rule, and when to yield
 Submission to a husband's will. The fame
 This conduct gained me, reached the Grecian camp,
 And proved my ruin : for when I became
 A captive, Neoptolemus resolved
 To take me to his bed, and in the house
 Of murderers I to slavery am consigned.
 If shaking off my Hector's loved remembrance
 To this new husband I my soul incline,
 I shall appear perfidious to the dead ;
 Or, if I hate Achilles' son, become
 Obnoxious to my lords ; though some assert
 That one short night can reconcile th' aversion
 Of any woman to the nuptial couch ;
 I scorn that widow, reft of her first lord,
 Who listens to the voice of love, and weds
 Another. From her comrade torn, the mare
 Sustains the yoke reluctant, though a brute
 Dumb and irrational, by nature formed
 Subordinate to man : but I in thee
 Possessed a husband, O my dearest Hector,
 In wisdom, fortune, and illustrious birth,
 For me sufficient, great in martial deeds :
 A spotless virgin-bride, me from the house
 Of my great father, didst thou first receive ;
 But thou art slain, and I to Greece must sail
 A captive, and endure the servile yoke !
 Is not the death of that Polyxena,
 Whom thou, O Hecuba, bewail'st, an ill
 More tolerable than those which I endure ?
 For hope, who visits every wretch beside,
 To me ne'er comes ; to me no promised joys
 Afford a flattering prospect to deceive
 This anxious bosom ; for 'tis sweet to think
 E'en of ideal bliss.

CHOR. Thou art involved
 In the same sufferings, and in plaintive notes
 Bewailing thy calamity, inform'st me
 What treatment to expect.

HEC. I ne'er did mount
 A ship, yet I from pictures and report
 These matters know : amidst a moderate storm,
 Such as they hope to weather out, the sailors
 To save themselves, exert a cheerful toil :

This to the rudder, to the shattered sails
 That goes, a third laborious at the pump
 Draws off the rising waters ; but if vanquished
 By the tempestuous ocean's rage, they yield
 To fortune, and consigning to the waves
 Their vessel, are at random driven along.
 Thus I am mute beneath unnumbered woes,
 Nor can this tongue expatiate, for the gods
 Such torrents pour as drown my feeble voice !
 But, O my daughter, cease to name the fate
 Of slaughtered Hector, whom no tears can save.
 Pay due attention to thy present lord,
 With amorous glances and a fond compliance
 Receiving him ; act thus, and thou wilt cheer
 Our friends, and this my grandson educate
 A bulwark to fallen Ilion, that his race
 The city may rebuild, and dwell in Troy.
 But a fresh topic of discourse ensues.
 What servant of the Greeks do I behold
 Again draw near, t' announce some new design ?

TALTHYBIUS, ANDROMACHE, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TAL. O thou who erst wert Hector's wife, that bravest
 Of Phrygians, hate me not ; for with reluctance
 Will I the general sentence of the Greeks
 And Pelops' progeny, announce.

AND.

What means

This evil prelude.

TAL.

'Tis decreed thy son—

How shall I speak it ?

AND.

To a separate lord

Shall be consigned ?

TAL.

None of the Grecian chiefs

Shall ever o'er Astyanax bear rule.

AND.

Must I leave here, him who alone remains
 Of all that erst was dear to me in Troy ?

TAL.

Alas ! I know not in what terms t' express
 The miseries that await thee ?

AND.

I commend

Such modesty, provided thou canst speak

Aught to afford me comfort.

TAL.

They resolve

To slay thy son ; thou hear'st my dismal errand.

AND.

Ah me ! thou hast unfolded to these ears
 An evil, greater than my menaced spousals.

TAL.

By his harangues to the assembled Greeks,
 Ulysses hath prevailed.

AND.

Alas ! alas !

Immoderate are the sorrows I endure.

TAL. Saying they ought not to train up the son
Of that heroic sire.

AND. May he obtain
O'er his own children triumphs great as these !

TAL. He from the towers of Iliou must be thrown :
But I entreat thee, and thou hence shall seem
More prudent, strive not to withhold thy son,
But bear thy woes with firmness ; nor, though weak,
Deem thyself strong ; for thou hast no support,
And therefore must consider that thy city
Is overthrown, thy husband is no more,
Thou art reduced to servitude ; and we
Are strong enough to combat with one woman :
O therefore brave not this unequal strife,
Stoop not to aught that's base, nor yet revile,
Nor idly scatter curses on thy foes ;
For if thou utter aught that may provoke
The anger of the host, thy son will bleed
Unburied and unwept : but if thou bear
With silence and composure thy misfortunes,
Funereal honours shall adorn his grave,
And Greece to thee her lenity extend.

AND. Thee, O my dearest son, thy foes will slay ;
Soon art thou doomed to leave thy wretched mother.
What saves the lives of others, the renown
Of an illustrious sire, to thee will prove
The cause of death : by this paternal fame
Art thou attended in an evil hour.
To me how luckless proved the genial bed,
And those espousals, that to Hector's house
First brought me, when I trusted I should bear
A son, no victim to the ruthless Greeks,
But an illustrious Asiatic king.
Weep'st thou, my son ? dost thou perceive thy woes ?
Why cling to me with timid hands ? Why seize
My garment ? thus beneath its mother's wings
The callow bird is sheltered. From the tomb,
No Hector brandishing his massive spear
Rushes to save thee ; no intrepid kinsman
Of thy departed father, nor the might
Of Phrygian hosts is here : but from aloof
Borne headlong by a miserable leap,
Shalt thou pour forth thy latest gasp of life
Unpitied. Tender burden in the arms
Of thy fond mother ! what ambrosial odours
Breathed from thy lips ? I swathed thee to my breast
In vain, I toiled in vain, and wore away
My strength with fruitless labours. Yet embrace
Thy mother once again ; around my neck
Twine thine arms, and give one parting kiss.

Ye Greeks, who studiously invent new modes
 Of unexampled cruelty, why slay
 This guiltless infant? Helen, O thou daughter
 Of Tyndarus, never didst thou spring from Jove,
 But I pronounce thee born of many sires,
 An evil Genius, Envy, Slaughter, Death,
 And every evil that from Earth receives
 Its nourishment; nor dare I to assert
 That Jove himself begot a pest like thee,
 Fatal to Greece and each barbarian chief.
 Perdition overtake thee! for those eyes
 By their seducing glances have o'erthrown
 The Phrygian empire. Bear this child away,
 And cast him from the turrets if ye list,
 Then banquet on his quivering flesh: the gods
 Ordain that I shall perish: nor from him
 Can I repel the stroke of death. Conceal
 This wretched form from public view, and plunge me
 In the ship's hold; for I have lost my son,
 Such the blest prelude to my nuptial rite.

CHOR. Thy myriads, hapless Ilion, did expire
 In combat for one woman, to maintain
 Paris' accursed espousals.

AND. Cease, my child,
 Fondly to lisp thy wretched mother's name,
 Ascend the height of thy paternal towers,
 Whence 'tis by Greece decreed thy parting breath
 Shall issue. Take him hence. Aloud proclaim
 This deed ye merciless: that wretch alone
 Who never knew the blush of virtuous shame,
 Your sentence can applaud.

[*Exeunt ANDROMACHE and TALTHYBIUS.*]

HEC. O child, thou son
 Of my unhappy Hector, from thy mother
 And me thou unexpectedly art torn.
 What can I do, what help afford? for thee
 I smite this head, this miserable breast;
 Thus far my power extends. Alas! thou city,
 And, O my grandson! is there yet a curse
 Beyond what we have felt? remains there aught
 To save us from the yawning gulf of ruin?

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

In Salamis' profound retreat
 Famed for the luscious treasures of the bee,
 High raised above th' encircling sea
 Thou, Telamon, didst fix thy regal seat;

Near to those sacred hills, where spread
 The olive first its fragrant sprays,
 To form a garland for Minerva's head,
 And the Athenian splendor raise :
 With the famed archer, with Alcmena's son
 Thou cam'st exulting with vindictive joy ;
 By your confederate arms was Ilium won,
 When from thy Greece thou cam'st our city to destroy.

I. 2.

Repining for the promised steeds,
 From Greece Alcides led a chosen band,
 With hostile prowls th' indented strand
 He reached, and anchored near fair Simois' meads ;
 Selected from each ship, he led
 Those who with dextrous hand could wing
 Th' unerring shaft, till slaughter reached thy head,
 Laomedon, thou perjured king :
 Those battlements which Phœbus' self did rear
 The victor wasted with devouring flame ;
 Twice o'er Troy's walls hath waved the hostile spear,
 Twice have insulting shouts announced Dardania's shame,

II. 1.

Thou bear'st the sparkling wine in vain
 With step effeminate, O Phrygian boy,
 Erewhile didst thou approach with joy
 To fill the goblet of imperial Jove ;
 For now thy Troy lies levelled with the plain,
 And its thick smoke ascends the realms above.
 On th' echoing coast our plaints we vent,
 As feathered songsters o'er their young bewail,
 A child or husband these lament,
 And those behold their captive mothers sail :
 The founts where thou didst bathe, th' athletic sports,
 Are now no more. Each blooming grace
 Sheds charms unheeded o'er thy placid face,
 And thou frequent'st Heaven's splendid courts.
 Triumphant Greece hath levelled in the dust
 The throne where Priam ruled the virtuous and the just.

II. 2.

With happier auspices, O love,
 Erst didst thou hover o'er this fruitful plain,
 Hence caught the gods thy thrilling pain ;
 By thee embellished, Troy's resplendent towers
 Reared their proud summits blest by thundering Jove,
 For our allies were the celestial powers.
 But I no longer will betray

Heaven's ruler to reproach and biting shame.
 The white-winged morn, blest source of day,
 Who cheers the nations with her kindling flame,
 Beheld these walls demolished, and th' abode
 Of that dear prince who shared her bed
 In fragments o'er the wasted champaign spread :
 While swift along the starry road,
 Her golden car his country's guardian bore :
 False was each amorous god, and Ilion is no more.

MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

MEN. Hail, O ye solar beams, who on this day,
 When I my consort Helen shall regain
 Your radiance shed. For I am he who long
 Endured the toils of battle, Menelaus,
 Attended by the Grecian host. To Troy,
 Not in a woman's cause, as many deem,
 I came, but came to punish him who broke
 The laws of hospitality, and ravished
 My consort from my palace. He hath suffered
 As he deserved, such was the will of Heaven,
 He and his country by the spear of Greece
 Have been destroyed. But I am come to bear
 That Spartan dame away, whom with regret
 I term my consort, though she once was mine.
 But she beneath these tents is with the rest
 Of Phrygia's captives numbered : for the troops
 Whose arms redeemed her, have to me consigned
 That I might either take away, or spare
 Her life, and waft her to the Argive coast.
 I am resolved that Helen shall not bleed
 In Troy, but o'er the foaming waves to Greece
 Will I convey her, and to them whose friends
 Before yon walls were slain, surrender up
 To perish by their vengeance. But with speed
 Enter the tent, thence by that hair defiled
 With murder, O my followers, drag her forth,
 And hither bring : for when a prosperous breeze
 Arises, her will I to Greece convey.

HEC. O thou who mov'st the world, and in this earth
 Hast fixed thy station, whosoe'er thou art,
 Impervious to our reason, whether thou,
 O Jove, art dread necessity which rules
 All nature, or that soul which animates
 The breasts of mortals, thee do I adore,
 For in a silent path thou tread'st and guid'st
 With justice the affairs of man.

MEN.

What means

This innovation in the solemn prayer
You to the gods address?

HEC. I shall applaud
The stroke, O Menelaus, if thou slay
Thy wife; but soon as thou behold'st her, fly,
Lest she with love ensnare thee. For the eyes
Of men she captivates, o'erturns whole cities,
And fires the roofs of lofty palaces,
She is possessed of such resistless charms;
Both I and thou and thousands to their cost,
Alas! are sensible how great her power.

HELEN, MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

HEL. O Menelaus, this is sure a prelude
To greater horrors. For with brutal hands
I by your servants from these tents am dragged?
Too well I know you hate me, yet would learn,
How you and Greece have of my life disposed.

MEN. Thou by the utmost rigour of the laws
Hast not been sentenced; but the host, to me
Whom thou hast wronged, consign thee to be slain.

HEL. May not I answer to these harsh resolves,
That if I bleed, unjustly shall I bleed?

MEN. I came not hither to debate, but slay thee?

HEC. Hear her, nor let her die, O Menelaus,
Without this privilege. Me too allow
To make reply to her defence; for nought
Of the foul deeds, which she in Troy committed
Yet know'st thou: if united, the whole tale
Must force thee to destroy her, and preclude
All means of her escaping.

MEN. An indulgence
Like this supposes leisure to attend;
However, if she have a wish to speak,
She may: but be assured, that my compliance
To your request is owing, for such favour
To her I would not grant.

HEL. Perhaps with me
Whom you account a foe, you will not deign,
Whether I seem to utter truth or falsehood,
To parley. But to each malignant charge
With which, O Hecuba, I know thou com'st
Prepared against me, will I make reply,
And to o'erbalance all that thou canst urge
Produce recriminations. First, she bore
Paris, the author of these mischiefs, next
Did aged Priam ruin Troy and me,
When erst that infant he forbore to slay,
That baleful semblance of a flaming torch!

Hear what ensued ; by Paris were the claims
Of the three rival goddesses decided.
The gift Minerva proffered ; that commanding
The Phrygians, he should conquer Greece ; while Juno
Promised, that he his empire should extend
From Asia to remotest Europe's bounds,
If he to her adjudged the golden prize ;
But Venus, who in rapturous terms extolled
My charms, engaged that as the great reward
She would on him bestow me ; to her beauty
If o'er each goddess he the preference gave.
Observe the sequel : Venus, o'er Minerva
And Juno, gained the triumph ; and my nuptials
Thus far have been a benefit to Greece ;
Ye are not subject to barbarian lords,
Crushed by invasion, or tyrannic power.
But I my ruin owe to what my country
Hath found thus advantageous, for my charms
To Paris sold, and branded with disgrace,
E'en for such deeds as merited a wreath
To crown these brows. But you may urge, that all
I have alleged is of no real weight,
Because by stealth I from your palace fled.
Accompanied by no mean goddess, came
That evil genius, sprung from Hecuba,
Distinguish him by either name you list,
Paris or Alexander, in your house,
Whom, O delirious, you behind you left,
And sailed from Sparta to the Cretan isle.
Well, be it so. Of my own heart, not you
I in regard to all that hence ensued
Will ask the question. What could have induced me,
Following that stranger, to forsake my home,
False to my native land ? impute the guilt
To Venus, and assume a power, beyond
E'en that of Jove, who rules th' inferior gods
But yields to her behests. My crime was venial ;
Yet hence you may allege a specious charge
Against me ; since to earth's dark vaults the corse
Of Paris was consigned, no longer bound
Through Heaven's supreme decree in nuptial chains,
I to the Grecian fleet should have escaped
From Ilion's palace ; such was my design :
This can the guards of Troy's beleaguered towers,
And sentinels who on the walls were stationed,
Attest, that oft they caught me, as with ropes
By stealth I strove to light upon the ground ;
But a new husband, fierce Deiphobus,
Obtained me for a wife by brutal force,

Though every Phrygian disapproved. What law
 Can sentence me, whom 'gainst my will he wedded,
 By you, my lord, with justice to be slain?
 But for the benefits through me derived
 To Greece, I in the stead of laureate wreaths
 With slavery am requited. If you wish
 To overcome the gods' supreme behests,
 That very wish were folly.

CHOR. O my Queen,
 Assert thy children's and thy country's cause,
 'Gainst her persuasive language, for she speaks
 With eloquence, though guilty : curst imposture !

HEC. I those three goddesses will first defend,
 And prove that she has uttered vile untruths :
 For of such madness ne'er can I suspect
 Juno and Pallas that immortal maid,
 As that the first should to barbarian tribes
 Propose to sell her Argos, or Minerva
 To make her Athens subject to the Phrygians :
 Seeking in sportive strife the palm of beauty
 They came to Ida's mount. For through what motive
 Could Juno with such eagerness have wished
 Her charms might triumph ? to obtain a husband
 Greater than Jove ? could Pallas, who besought
 Her sire she ever might remain a virgin,
 Propose to wed some deity ? Forbear
 To represent these goddesses as foolish,
 That thy transgressions may by their example
 Be justified : thou never canst persuade
 The wise. Thou hast presumed t' assert (but this
 Was a ridiculous pretence) that Venus
 Came with my son to Menelaus' house.
 Could she not calmly have abode in Heaven,
 Yet wafted thee and all Amycla's city
 To Ilion ? but the beauty of my son
 Was great, and thy own heart, when thou beheld'st him
 Became thy Venus : for whatever folly
 Prevails, is th' Aphrodite of mankind :
 That of Love's goddess, justly doth commence
 With the same letters as an idiot's name.
 Him didst thou see in a barbaric vest
 With gold refulgent, and thy wanton heart
 Was thence inflamed with love, for thou wert poor
 While yet thou didst reside in Greece ; but leaving
 The Spartan regions, thou didst hope, the city
 Of Troy, with gold o'erflowing, could support
 Thy prodigality ; for the revenues
 Of Menelaus far too scanty proved
 For thy luxuriant appetites : but sayst thou

That Paris bore thee thence by force? what Spartan
 Saw this? or, with what cries didst thou invoke
 Castor or Pollux, thy immortal brothers,
 Who yet on earth remained, nor had ascended
 The starry height? But since thou cam'st to Troy,
 And hither the confederate troops of Greece
 Tracing thy steps, began the bloody strife,
 Whene'er thou heard'st that Menelaus prospered
 Him didst thou praise, and make my son to grieve
 That such a mighty rival shared thy love:
 But if the Trojan army proved victorious,
 He shrunk into a thing of nought. On Fortune
 Still didst thou look, still deaf to Virtue's call
 Follow her banners: yet dost thou assert
 That thou by cords hast from the lofty towers
 In secrecy attempted to descend,
 As if thou here hadst been constrained to stay?
 Where then wert thou surprised, or sharpened sword,
 Or ropes preparing, as each generous dame
 Who sought her former husband would have done?
 Oft have I counselled thee in many words:
 "Depart, O daughter, that my sons may take
 Brides less obnoxious: thee aboard the ships
 Of Greece, assisting in thy secret flight,
 Will I convey. O end the war 'twixt Greece
 And Ilion." But to thee was such advice
 Unwelcome; for with pride thou in the house
 Of Paris didst behave thyself, and claim
 The adoration of barbaric tribes,
 For this was thy great object. But e'en now
 Thy charms displaying, clad in gorgeous vest
 Dost thou go forth, still daring to behold
 That canopy of Heaven which o'erhangs
 Thy injured husband; thou detested woman!
 Whom it had suited, if in tattered vest
 Shivering, with tresses shorn, in Scythian guise
 Thou hadst appeared, and for transgressions past
 Deep smitten with remorse, assumed the blush
 Of virtuous matrons, not that frontless air.
 O Menelaus! I will now conclude;
 By slaying her, prepare for Greece the wreaths
 It merits, and extend to the whole sex
 This law, that every woman who betrays
 Her lord shall die.

CHOR. As that illustrious stem
 Whence thou deriv'st thy birth, and as thy rank
 Demand, on thy adulterous wife inflict
 Just punishment, and purge this foul reproach,
 This instance of a woman's lust, from Greece:

So shall thy very enemies perceive
Thou art magnanimous.

MEN. Your thoughts concur
With mine, that she a willing fugitive
My palace left and sought a foreign bed ;
But speaks of Venus merely to disguise
Her infamy !—Away ! thou shalt be stoned,
And in one instant for the tedious woes
Of Greece make full atonement ; I will teach thee
That thou didst shame me in an evil hour.

HEL. I by those knees entreat you, O forbear
To slay me, that distraction sent by Heaven
To me imputing : but forgive me.

HEC. Wrong not
Thy partners in the war, whom she hath slain ;
In theirs, and in my children's cause, I sue.

MEN. Desist, thou hoary matron : her entreaties
Move not this steadfast bosom. O my followers
Attend her, I command you, to the ships
Which shall convey her hence.

HEC. Let her not enter
Thy ship.

MEN. Is she grown heavier than before ?

HEC. He never loved who doth not always love,
Howe'er the inclinations of the dame
He loves may fluctuate.

MEN. All shall be performed
According to thy wish ; she shall not enter
My bark : for thou hast uttered wholesome counsels :
But soon as she in Argos' lands, with shame,
As she deserves, shall she be slain, and warn
All women to be chaste. No easy task :
Yet shall her ruin startle every child
Of folly, though more vicious still than Helen.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

E'en thus by too severe a doom,
To Greece, O Jove, hast thou betrayed
Our shrines, our altars, dropping rich perfume,
The lambent flame that round the victims played,
Myrrh's odorous smoke that mounts the skies,
Yon holy citadel, with Ida's grove
Around whose oaks the clasping ivy plies,
Where rivulets meandering rove

Cold and translucent from the drifted snows ;
 On that high ridge with orient blaze
 The sun first scatters his enlivening rays,
 And with celestial flame th' ecstatic priestess glows.

I. 2.

Each sacrifice, each pious rite,
 Hence vanished, with th' harmonious choirs
 Whose accents soothed the languid ear of night,
 While to the gods we waked our sounding lyres ;
 Their golden images no more
 Twelve times each year, on that revolving eve
 When shines the full-orbed moon, do we adore.
 Harassed by anxious fears, I grieve,
 Oft thinking whether thou, O Jove, wilt deign
 To listen to our piteous moan,
 High as thou sitt'st on thy celestial throne ;
 For Troy, by fire consumed, lies level with the plain.

II. I.

Thou, O my husband, roam'st a flitting shade,
 To thee are all funereal rites denied,
 To thee no lustral drops supplied :
 But I by the swift bark shall be conveyed
 Where Argos' cloud-capped fortress stands,
 Erected by the Cyclops' skilful hands.
 Before our doors assembling children groan,
 And oft repeat with clamorous moan
 A mother's name. Alone shall I be borne
 Far from thy sight, by the victorious host
 Of Greece, and leaving Ilion's coast,
 O'er ocean's azure billows sail forlorn,
 Either to Salamis, that sacred land,
 Or where the Isthmian summit o'er two seas
 A wide extended prospect doth command,
 Seated in Pelops' straits where Greece the prize decrees.

II. 2.

Its arduous voyage more than half complete,
 In the Ægean deep, and near the land,
 May the red lightning by Jove's hand
 Winged from the skies with tenfold ruin, meet
 The bark that wafts me o'er the wave
 From Troy to Greece a miserable slave.
 Before the golden mirror wont to braid
 Her tresses, like a sportive maid,
 May Helen never reach the Spartan shore,
 Those household gods to whom she proved untrue,
 Nor her paternal mansions view,

Enter the streets of Pitane no more,
 Nor Pallas' temple with its brazen gate ;
 Because her nuptials teemed with foul disgrace
 To mighty Greece through each confederate state ;
 And hence on Simois' banks were slain Troy's guiltless race

But ha ! on this devoted realm are hurled
 Successive woes. Ye hapless Phrygian dames,
 Behold the slain Astyanax, whom Greece
 With rage inhuman from yon towers hath thrown.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

The Body of ASTYANAX borne in upon a Shield.

TAL. O Hecuba, one ship is left behind
 To carry the remainder of the spoils
 Which to Achilles' son have been adjudged,
 To Phthia's coast. For Neoptolemus,
 Hearing that recent evils hath befall'n
 His grandsire Peleus, and that Pelias' son
 Acastus hath expelled him from his realm,
 Already hath departed with such speed
 As would admit of no delay : with him
 Andromache is gone, for whom I shed
 A stream of tears, when from the land she went
 Wailing her country, and to Hector's tomb
 Her plaints addressing : the victorious chief
 Hath she entreated, to allow the corse
 Of your unhappy Hector's son, who perished
 From Ilion's ramparts thrown, to be interred,
 Nor bear this shield, the terror of the Greeks,
 With brass refulgent, which his father placed
 Before his flank in battle, to the house
 Of Peleus ; nor to that ill-omened chamber
 Where spousals dire on her arrival wait
 The mother of the slain ; for such an object
 Must grieve her to behold : but in the stead
 Of cedar and the monumental stone,
 Bury the child in this : for she the corse
 Hath to your arms consigned, that you may grace it
 With many a fragrant garland, and with vests
 Such as your present fortunes will afford.
 For she has sailed, and through his haste her lord
 Prevented her from lodging in the grave
 Her son. While thus you his remains adorn
 We will mark out the spot, and with our spears
 Dig up the ground. Without delay perform
 These duties : I onc task to you most irksome
 Have rendered needless : for I laved the body,

And cleansed the wounds as o'er Scamander's stream
 I passed. But to prepare for the deceased
 A tomb, I go, that with united toil
 When this we have accomplished, they may steer
 Our vessel homeward. [Exit TALTHYBIUS.]

HEC. Place that orb'd shield
 Of Hector on the ground, a spectacle
 Most piteous, and unwelcome to these eyes.
 How, O ye Greeks, whose abject souls belie
 Your brave achievements, trembling at a child,
 Could ye commit this unexampled murder,
 Lest at some future time he should rebuild
 The walls of Ilion? Ye inhuman cowards!
 Our ruin from that fatal hour we date
 When Hector with unnumbered heroes fell.
 But having sacked our city, and destroyed
 Each Phrygian warrior, feared ye such an infant
 The dastard I abhor who meanly shrinks
 Through groundless panic. O for ever loved,
 By what a piteous fate didst thou expire!
 Hadst thou, the champion of thy country, died,
 In riper years, when married, and endued
 With power scarce second to th' immortal gods,
 Thou hadst been blest, if aught on earth deserves
 The name of bliss. But thou, my son, beheld'st
 And hadst a distant knowledge of these joys,
 Which thou didst ne'er experience: for to thee
 The treasures which the palaces of Troy
 Contained, proved useless. O unhappy youth,
 How wert thou hurled from thy paternal walls
 Reared by Apollo's hand; and through those ringlets,
 Which oft thy mother smoothed and kissed, the gore
 Bursts from thy fractured skull: but let me waive
 So horrid a description. O ye hands,
 How in your fingers do ye still retain
 A pleasing sad remembrance of your sire,
 Or why do ye lie motionless before me?
 Dear mouth, full many a babbling accent wont
 To utter, art thou closed by death? Thy voice
 Deceived me erst, when clinging to these garments,
 "O mother," oft didst thou exclaim, "the hair
 Shorn from my brows to thee I will devote,
 Lead round thy tomb my comrades, and address
 Thy hovering ghost in many a plaintive strain."
 Now not to me, alas! dost thou perform
 These duteous offices, but I, bowed down
 With age, an exile, of my children reft,
 Must bury the disfigured corse of thee
 A tender infant. These unnumbered kisses,

My cares in nurturing thee, and broken sleep,
 Proved fruitless. What inscription can the bard
 Place o'er thy sepulchre? "The Greeks who feared
 This infant, slew him!" Such an epitaph
 Would shame them. As for thee who hast obtained
 Nought of thy wealth paternal, yet this shield
 In which thou shalt be buried will be thine.
 O brazen orb, which erst wert wont to guard
 The nervous arm of Hector, thou hast lost
 Thy best possessor: in thy concave circle
 How is that hero's shape impressed; it bears
 Marks of that sweat which dropped from Hector's brow,
 Worn with toil, when 'gainst thy edge he leaned
 His cheek. Hence carry, to adorn the corse,
 Whate'er our present station will afford,
 For such the fortunes which Jove grants us now
 As splendour suits not: yet accept these gifts
 Out of the little I possess. An idiot
 Is he, who thinking himself blest, exults
 As if his joys were stable: like a man
 Smitten with frenzy, changeful fortune bounds
 Inconstant in her course, now here, now there,
 Nor is there any one who leads a life
 Of bliss uninterrupted.

CHOR.

All is ready:

For from the spoils yon Phrygian matrons bear
 Trappings to grace the dead.

HEC.

On thee, my son,

Not as a victor who with rapid steeds
 Didst ever reach the goal, or wing the shaft
 With surer aim, an exercise revered
 By each unwearied Phrygian youth, thy grandame
 Places these ornaments which erst were thine:
 But now hath Helen, by the gods abhorred,
 Stripped thee of all thou didst possess, and caused
 Thy murder, and the ruin of our house.

CHOR. Alas! thou hast transpierced my inmost soul,
 O thou, whom I expected to have seen
 Troy's mighty ruler.

HEC.

But I now enwrap

Thy body with the vest thou shouldst have worn
 At Hymen's festive rites, in wedlock joined
 With Asia's noblest princess. But, O source
 Of triumphs numberless, dear shield of Hector,
 Accept these laureate wreaths: for though by death
 Thou canst not be affected, thou shalt lie
 Joined with this corse in death; since thou deserv'st
 More honourable treatment, than the arms
 Of crafty and malignant Ithacus.

CHOR. Thee, much lamented youth, shall earth receive.
Now groan, thou wretched mother.

HEC. Oh !

CHOR. Commence
Those wailings which are uttered o'er the dead.

HEC. Ah me !

CHOR. Alas ! too grievous are thy woes
To be endured.

HEC. These fillets o'er thy wounds
I bind, and exercise the healing art
In name and semblance only, but, alas !
Not in reality. Whate'er remains
Unfinished, 'mid the shades beneath, to thee
With tender care thy father will supply.

CHOR. Smite with thy hand thy miserable head
Till it resound. Alas !

HEC. My dearest comrades.

CHOR. Speak to thy friends ; O Hecuba, what plaints
Hast thou to utter ?

HEC. Nought but woe for me
Was by the gods reserved ; beyond all cities
To them hath Troy been odious. We in vain
Have offered sacrifice. But had not Jove
O'erthrown and plunged us in the shades beneath,
We had remained obscure, we by the Muse
Had ne'er been sung, nor ever furnished themes
To future bards. But for this hapless youth
Go and prepare a grave ; for the deceased
Is with funereal wreaths already crowned :
Although these pomps, I deem, are to the dead
Of little consequence ; an empty pride
They in the living serve but to display.

CHOR. Thy wretched mother on thy vital thread
Had stretched forth mighty hopes : though styled most happy
From thy illustrious birth, thou by a death
Most horrid didst expire.

HEC. Ha ! who are these
Whom I behold, in their victorious hands
Waving those torches o'er the roofs of Troy ?
E'en now o'er Ilion some fresh woes impend.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TAL. To you I speak, O leaders of the troops
Who are ordained to burn this town of Priam.
No longer in your hands without effect
Reserve those blazing torches : but hurl flames
On this devoted city, for when Troy
Is utterly demolished, we shall leave

Its hated shores, exulting. But to you,
 O Phrygians, I the same behests address ;
 When the shrill trumpet of our chief resounds,
 Ye to the Grecian navy must repair
 And from these regions sail. But as for thee,
 Thou aged and most miserable dame,
 Follow their steps who from Ulysses come,
 To whom thy fate consigns thee for a slave
 Far from thy country in a foreign land.

HEC. Ah, wretched me ! this surely is the last,
 The dire completion this, of all my woes.
 I leave my country : Ilion's bulwarks flame.
 Yet, O decrepit feet, with painful haste
 Bear me along, that I may bid adieu
 To my unhappy city. Thou, O Troy,
 Distinguished erst among barbarian tribes
 By thy superior prowess, soon shalt lose
 The most illustrious name thou didst acquire :
 Thee will the flames consume, and us our foes
 Drag from our home to slavery. O ye gods !
 Upon the gods yet wherefore should I call ?
 For when we erst invoked them oft, they heard not.
 Come on, and let us rush amid the flames :
 For in the ruins of my blazing country
 'Twill be to me most glorious to expire.

TAL. Thy griefs, O wretched woman, make thee frantic.
 But lead her hence, neglect not. For Ulysses
 Obtained this prize, and she to him must go.

HEC. O dread Saturnian king, from whom the Phrygians
 Derive their origin, dost thou behold
 Our sufferings, most unworthy of the race
 Of Dardanus ?

CHOR. He surely doth behold :
 But this great city, city now no more,
 Is ruined : nought remains of Troy.

HEC. The blaze
 Of Ilion glares, the fire hath caught the roofs,
 The streets of Pergamus, and crashing towers.

CHOR. As the light smoke on rapid wing ascends
 To heaven, how swiftly vanishes fallen Troy !
 Torrents of flame have laid the palace waste,
 And o'er its summit waves the hostile spear.

HEC. O fostering soil, that gave my children birth.

CHOR. Alas ! alas !

HEC. Yet hear me, O my sons,
 Your mother's voice distinguish.

CHOR. With loud complaints
 Thou call'st upon the dead, those aged limbs
Stretched on the ground, and scraping up the dust

With either hand. I follow thy example
Kneeling on earth's cold bosom, and invoke
My wretched husband in the shades beneath.

HEC. We forcibly are borne——

CHOR.

Most doleful sound!

HEC. To servile roofs.

CHOR.

From my dear native land.

HEC. Slain, uninterred, abandoned by thy friends,
Thou sure, O Priam, know'st not what I suffer.
For sable death hath closed thine eyes for ever;
Though pious, thou by impious hands wert murdered.
O ye polluted temples of the gods,
And thou my dearest city.

CHOR.

Ye, alas !

Are by the deadly flame and pointed spear
Now occupied, on this beloved soil
Soon shall you lie a heap of nameless ruins :
For dust, which mixed with smoke, to Heaven ascends,
No longer will permit me to discern
Where erst my habitation stood : the land
Loses its very name, and each memorial
Of pristine grandeur ; wretched Troy's no more.

HEC. Ye know the fatal truth, ye heard the crash
Of falling towers. Our city to its basis
Is shaken. O ye trembling, trembling limbs,
Support my steps !

TAL.

Depart to end thy days

In servitude. Alas ! thou wretched city !
Yet to the navy of the Greeks proceed.

THE CYCLOPS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

SILENUS.
CHORUS OF SATYRS.

ULYSSES.
POLYPHEME THE CYCLOPS.

SCENE.—THE MOUNTAIN OF ÆTNA IN SICILY.

SILENUS.

O BACCHUS, for thy sake have I endured
Unnumbered toils, both at the present hour,
And when these nerves by vigorous youth were strung :
By Juno first with wild distraction fired,
Thou didst forsake the mountain nymphs whose care
Nurtured thy infancy. Next in that war
With the gigantic progeny of earth,
Stationed beside thee to sustain thy shield,
Piercing the buckler of Enceladus,
I slew him with my lance. Is this a dream?
By Jove it is not : for I showed his spoils
To Bacchus, and the labours I endure
At present, are so great that they exceed
E'en those. For since 'gainst thee Saturnia roused,
To bear thee far away, Etruria's race
Of impious pirates, I soon caught th' alarm,
And sailed in quest of thee with all my children :
Myself the stern ascended, to direct
The rudder, and each satyr plied an oar
Till ocean's azure surface with white foam
Was covered ; thee, O mighty King, they sought.
Near Malea's harbour as the vessel rode,
An eastern blast arose, and to this rock
Of Ætna, drove us, where the sons of Neptune,
The one-eyed Cyclops, drenched with human gore,
Inhabit desert caves ; by one of these
Were we made captives, and beneath his roof
To slavery are reduced. Our master's name

Is Polypheme ; instead of Bacchus' orgies
 We tend the flocks of an accursed Cyclops.
 My blooming sons, on yonder distant cliffs,
 Feed the young lambs ; while I at home am stationed
 The goblet to replenish, and to scrape
 The rugged floor ; to this unholy lord,
 A minister of impious festivals :
 And now must I perform the task assigned
 Of cleansing with this rake the filthy ground,
 So shall the cave be fit for his reception,
 When with his flocks my absent lord returns.
 But I already see my sons approach,
 Their fleecy charge conducting. Ha ! what means
 This uproar ? would ye now renew the dance
 Of the Siciinnides, as when ye formed
 The train of amorous Bacchus, and assembled,
 Charmed by the lute, before Althæa's gate ?

CHORUS, SILENUS.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Sprung from an untainted race,
 Hardy father of the fold,
 Why, bounding o'er that craggy space,
 Roam'st thou desperately bold,
 Far from the refreshing gale,
 The verdant herbage of the mead,
 And sloping channel wont to feed
 Thy trough with springs that never fail ?
 Yon caves with bleating lambkins ring,
 Come, depasture with the flock ;
 Leave, O leave the dewy rock,
 Ere this ponderous stone I fling.
 Thee with speeding horns I call
 To the Cyclops' lofty stall.

II.

Thou too those swollen udders yield,
 That thy young ones may be fed,
 Who, while thou browses't o'er the field,
 Lie neglected in the shed ;
 Slumbering all the livelong day
 At length with clamorous complaints they wake,
 Thou t' appease them wilt forsake
 Ætna's valleys ever gay.

Young Bromius and his jocund rout
 Here their orgies ne'er repeat,
 No thyrsus waves, no drums they beat ;
 Where the gurgling currents spout,
 Here no vineyards yield delight,
 Nor sport the nymphs on Nyssa's height.

III.

Yet here I chaunt the strains which Bacchus taught,
 To that Venus whom I sought
 When with the Mænades I ranged.
 Where, gentle Evan, dost thou tread
 Alone, and from thy comrades far estranged,
 Those auburn ringlets floating from thy head ?
 Thy votary once, but now a slave
 To yonder one-eyed Cyclops, I abide
 In this detested cave :
 Covered with a goat's vile hide,
 Thy friend, alas ! exposed to scorn
 Wanders helpless and forlorn.

SIL. My sons, be silent : bid your followers drive
 Their flocks into the stony cave.

CHOR.

Proceed.

But wherefore, O my father, in this haste ?

SIL. A Grecian vessel, stranded on the coast,
 I see, and to this cave the mariners
 Attend their leader, on their heads they bear
 Those empty vessels which express they want
 Provisions, with fresh water too their urns
 Would they replenish. O unhappy strangers !
 Who are they ? unapprised what lord here rules,
 Dread Polypheme, they in an evil hour
 Are entering this inhospitable threshold,
 And rushing headlong e'en into the jaws
 Of this fierce Cyclops, gorged with human flesh.
 But interrupt me not ; I will inquire
 Whence to Sicilian Ætna's mount they came.

ULYSSES, SILENUS, CHORUS.

ULV. Can ye direct me, strangers, where to find
 Fresh springs to slake our thirst ; or who will sell
 Food to the hungry sailor ? But what means
 That group of satyrs, whom before yon cave
 I see assembled ? we at Bacchus' city
 Seem to have landed. Thee, the elder-born,
 Thee first I hail.

SIL. Hail ! foreigner ; acquaint us
Both who you are, and from what realm you came.
ULY. Ulysses, king of Ithaca, and th' isle
Of Cephalenè.

SIL. That loquacious man,
The crafty brood of Sisyphus, full well
I know.

ULY. Reproach me not, for I am he.

SIL. Whence sailed you to Sicilia ?

ULY. From the shores
Of blazing Ilion, from the war of Troy.

SIL. What, knew you not the way to your own country ?

ULY. The tempests violently drove me hither.

SIL. By Heaven, your fortunes are the same with mine.

ULY. What cam'st thou hither too against thy will ?

SIL. Yes, in pursuit of those accursed pirates
Who seized on Bromius.

ULY. But what land is this,
And by what men inhabited ?

SIL. This mountain,
Called Ætna, overlooks Sicilia's plains.

ULY. Where are the fortresses and lofty towers
Which guard its peopled cities ?

SIL. They exist not.
No men, O stranger, on these summits dwell.

ULY. But who possess the land, a savage race
Of beasts ?

SIL. The Cyclops occupy these caves,
They have no houses.

ULY. Governed by what chief ?
Is this a mere democracy ?

SIL. They lead
The life of shepherds, and in no respect
Yield to each other.

ULY. Do they sow the grain
Of Ceres, or on what do they subsist ?

SIL. On milk, on cheese, and on their sheep, they feed.

ULY. Affords the vine, nectareous juice, the drink
Bacchus invented ?

SIL. No such thing : they dwell
In an ungrateful soil.

ULY. But do they practise
The rites of hospitality, and hold
The stranger sacred ?

SIL. They avert the flesh
Of strangers is a most delicious food.

ULY. What saidst thou, banquet they on human flesh ?

SIL. Here no man lands who is not doomed to bleed.

ULY. Where is this Cyclops, in the cave ?

- SIL. He went
To Ætna's summit, with his hounds to trace
The savage beasts.
- ULY. But know'st thou by what means
We from this region may escape?
- SIL. I know not.
But, O Ulysses, I'll do everything
To serve you.
- ULY. Sell us bread, supply our want.
SIL. I told you we have nothing here but flesh.
- ULY. By this, sharp hunger, which makes all things sweet,
May be assuaged.
- SIL. Cheese from the press, and milk
Of heifers too.
- ULY. Produce them: while the day
Yet lasts, should we conclude our merchandise.
- SIL. With how much gold will you repay me? Speak.
- ULY. No gold I bring, but Bacchus' cheering juice.
- SIL. My dearest friend, you mention what we long
Have stood in need of.
- ULY. This enchanting liquor
Did Maron, offspring of the courteous god,
On us bestow.
- SIL. Whom erst, while yet a boy
I in these arms sustained.
- ULY. The son of Bacchus,
T' inform thee more minutely who he is.
- SIL. Aboard the ship, or have you hither brought it?
- ULY. Here is the cask, old man, which thou perceiv'st
Contains the wine.
- SIL. It hardly is a sup.
- ULY. But we have twice as much as this will yield.
- SIL. A most delicious spring is that you named.
- ULY. Shall I first treat thee with some wine unmixed,
That thou may'st taste?
- SIL. Well judged: this specimen
Soon will induce me to conclude the purchase.
- ULY. A cup too I have brought as well as cask.
- SIL. Pour forth, that I may drink, and recollect
The grateful taste of wine.
- ULY. Look there!
- SIL. Ye gods!
How beauteous is its odour!
- ULY. Hast thou seen it?
- SIL. By Jove I have not, but I smell its charms.
- ULY. Taste, nor to words alone confine thy praise.
- SIL. Ha! ha! now Bacchus to the choral dance
Invites me.
- ULY. Hath it moistened well thy palate?

SIL. So well as e'en to reach my fingers' ends.

ULY. Beside all this, shall money too be thine.

SIL. Empty the vessel, and reserve your gold.

ULY. Bring forth the cheese and lambs.

SIL.

That will I do,

Regardless of my lord, because I wish
To drain one goblet of this wine, and give
The flocks of all the Cyclops in its stead.
I'd from Leucadè, when completely drunk,
Into the ocean take a lover's leap,
Shutting my eyes. For he who, when he quaffs
The mantling bowl, exults not, is a madman.
Through wine new joys our wanton bosoms fire,
With eager arms we clasp the yielding fair,
And in the giddy dance forget each ill
That heretofore assailed us. So I kiss
The rich potation; let the stupid Cyclops
Weep with that central eye which in his front
Glares horribly.

[Exit SILENUS.]

CHOR. Attend: for we must hold

A long confabulation, O Ulysses.

ULY. We meet each other like old friends.

CHOR.

Was Troy

By you subdued? was Helen taken captive?

ULY. And the whole house of Priam we laid waste.

CHOR. When ye had seized on that transcendent fair,
Did ye then all enjoy her in your turn,
Because she loves variety of husbands?
False to her vows, when she the painted greaves
Around the legs of Paris, on his neck
The golden chain, beheld, with love deep smitten
From Menelaus, best of men, she fled.
Ah! would to Heaven no women had been born
But such as were reserved for my embraces.

SILENUS *returning*, ULYSSES, CHORUS.

SIL. Here, King Ulysses, is the shepherd's food:
Banquet on bleating lambs, and bear away
As many curdled cheeses as you can;
But from these caverns with your utmost speed
Depart, when ye have given me in return
The clustering vine's rich juice which Bacchus loves.

ULY. The Cyclops comes. What shall we do? Old man,
We are undone. Ah, whither can we fly?

SIL. Ye may conceal yourselves beneath that rock.

ULY. Most dangerous is the scheme thou hast proposed,
To rush into the toils.

SIL.

No danger truly;

For in this rock is many a hiding-place.

ULY. Not thus: indignant Troy might groan indeed

If from a single arm we basely fled.
 Oft with my shield against a countless band
 Of Phrygians have I fought. If we must die,
 Let us die nobly : or with life maintain
 The fame we erst in dubious fields acquired.

POLYPHEME, SILENUS, CHORUS, ULYSSES.

POL. What mean these transports, this insensate uproar,
 These Bacchanalian orgies? Nyssa's god,
 The brazen timbrel, and the rattling drum,
 Are distant from these regions. In the cave
 How fare the new-yeaned lambkins? do they suck,
 Or follow they the ewes? have ye prepared
 In wicker vats the cheeses? No reply?
 This club shall make ye weep forthwith. Look up,
 Not on the ground.

CHOR. We lift our dazzled eyes
 To Jove himself; I view the twinkling stars
 And bright Orion.

POL. Is my dinner ready?

CHOR. It is. Prepare your jaws for mastication.

POL. Are the bowls filled with milk?

CHOR. They overflow,
 And you may drink whole hogsheads if you will.

POL. Of sheep, or cows, or mixed?

CHOR. Whate'er you please;
 But swallow not me too.

POL. No certainly;
 For ye would foot it in my tortured paunch,
 And kill me with those antics. But what crowd
 Behold I in the stalls? Some thieves or pirates
 Are landed: at the mouth of yonder cave
 The lambs are bound with osiers, on the floor
 The cheese-press scattered lies, and the bald head
 Of this old man is swoll'n with many bruises.

SIL. Ah me! into a fever I am beaten.

POL. By whom, old man, who smote thy hoary head?

SIL. O Cyclops, by these ruffians whom I hindered
 From carrying off their plunder.

POL. Know they not
 I am a god sprung from the blest immortals?

SIL. All this I told them, yet they seized your goods,
 Eat up your cheese without my leave, dragged forth
 The lambs, declared they would exhibit you
 In a huge collar of three cubits long,
 Closely imprisoned, and before that eye,
 Which in the centre of your forehead glares,
 Bore out your entrails, soundly scourge your hide,
 Then throw you into their swift vessel's hold
 Tied hand and foot, and sell you, with a lever

To heave up ponderous stones, or to the ground
Level some door.

POL. Indeed ! go whet the knives
Without delay, collect a mighty pile
Of wood, and light it up with flaming brands,
They shall be slain immediately, and broiled
To satisfy my appetite with viands
Hot from the coals. The rest shall be well sodden ;
For I am sated with unsavoury beasts,
Enough on lions have I banqueted
And stags that haunt this mountain : but 'tis long
Since human flesh I tasted.

SIL. My dread lord,
Variety is sweet : no other strangers
Have reached of late these solitary caves.

ULY. O Cyclops, hear the strangers also speak,
In their defence. We, wanting to buy food,
Came to your caverns from our anchored bark.
These lambs to us he bartered for our wine,
And of his own accord, when he had drank,
Yielded them up ; no violence was used :
But the account he gives is utter falsehood,
Since he was caught without your privity
Vending your goods.

SIL. I ? curses on your head !

ULY. If I have uttered an untruth.

SIL. By Neptune
Your sire, O Cyclops, by great Triton, Nereus,
Calypso, Nereus' daughters, by the waves,
And all the race of fishes, I protest,
Most beauteous Cyclops, my dear little lord,
I sold not to the foreigners your goods ;
May swift perdition, if I did, o'ertake
These sinners here, my children, whom I love
Beyond expression.

CHOR. Curb thy tongue : I saw thee
Vending thy lord's possessions to the strangers :
If I speak falsehood, may our father perish !
But injure not these foreigners.

POL. Ye lie ;
For I in him much rather would confide
Than Rhadamanthus, and pronounce that he
Is a more upright judge. But I to them
Some questions would propose. Whence sailed, strangers ?
Where is your country and your native town ?

ULY. We in the realms of Ithaca were born ;
But after we had laid Troy's bulwarks waste,
O Cyclops, by those howling winds which raise
The ocean's boisterous surges, to your coast
Our vessel was impelled.

POL. Are ye the men
Who worthless Helen's ravisher pursued
To Ilion's turrets on Scamander's bank?

ULY. The same : most dreadful toils have we endured.

POL. Dishonourable warfare ; in the cause
Of one vile woman ye to Phrygia sailed.

ULY. Such was the will of Jove ; on no man charge
The fault. But we to you, O generous son
Of ocean's god, our earnest prayers address,
Nor fear with honest freedom to remonstrate
That we your hapless friends, who to these caves
For refuge fly, deserve not to be slain
To satiate with accursed human food
Your appetite : for to your sire, great king,
Full many a temple on the shores of Greece
Have we erected ; Tænarus' sacred haven
To him remains inviolate, the cliff
Of Malea, Sunium for its silver mines
Renowned, on whose steep promontory stands
Minerva's fane, and the Gerastian bay.
But those intolerable wrongs which Greece
From Troy had suffered, could we not forgive.
Our triumph interests you, who in a land
With Greece connected, dwell, beneath the rock
Of flaming *Ætna*. Let those public laws
Which all mankind obey, on you prevail
To change your ruthless purpose, and admit
Your suppliants to a conference, who have long
Endured the perils of the billowy deep ;
With hospitable gifts, and change of raiment
Assist us, nor affix our quivering limbs
On spits, to sate your gluttony. Enough
Hath Priam's land depopulated Greece,
Whole myriads have in fighting fields been slain ;
The widowed bride, the aged childless matron,
And hoary sire, hath Troy made ever wretched.
But if you burn, and at your hateful feasts
Devour the scattered relics of our host,
Whither shall any Grecian turn ? but listen
To my persuasion, Cyclops, and control
Your gluttony. What piety enjoins,
Prefer to this defiance of the gods :
For ruin oft attends unrighteous gain.

SIL. Leave not the smallest morsel of his flesh ;
Take my advice, and if you eat his tongue,
You certainly, O Cyclops, will become
A most accomplished orator.

POL. Vile caitiff,
Wealth is the deity the wise adore,
But all things else are unsubstantial boasts,

And specious words alone. I nought regard
 Those promontories sacred to my sire.
 Why dost thou talk of them? I tremble not,
 O stranger, at the thunderbolts of Jove,
 Him I account not a more powerful god
 Than I am, nor henceforth will heed him : hear
 My reasons ; when he from the skies sends down
 The rain, secure from its inclemency
 Beneath this rock I dwell, and make a feast
 On roasted calves, or on the savage prey,
 Stretched at my length supine, then drain a pitcher
 Of milk, and emulate the thunder's sound.
 When Thracian Boreas pours his flaky showers,
 In hides of beasts my body I enwrap,
 Approach the fire, nor heed the pelting snows.
 Compelled by strong necessity, the ground
 Produces grass, and nourishes my herds,
 Whom, to no other god except myself,
 And to this belly, greatest of the gods,
 I sacrifice. Because each day to eat,
 To drink, and feel no grief, is bliss supreme,
 The Heaven, the object of the wise man's worship.
 I leave those gloomy lawgivers to weep,
 Who by their harsh impertinent restrictions
 Have chequered human life ; but will indulge
 My genius, and devour thee. That my conduct
 May be exempt from blame, thou shalt receive
 As pledges of our hospitality
 The fire, and that hereditary cauldron
 Well heated, which shall boil thy flesh : walk in,
 Ye shall adorn my table, and produce
 Delicious meals to cheer my gloomy cave,
 Such as a god can relish.

ULY.

I have 'scaped,
 Alas ! each danger at the siege of Troy,
 'Scaped the tempestuous ocean ; but in vain
 Attempt to soften the un pitying heart
 Of him who spurns all laws. Now, sacred queen,
 Daughter of Jove, now aid me, O Minerva,
 For I such perils as far, far exceed
 My Phrygian toils, encounter : and, O Jove,
 Dread guardian of each hospitable rite,
 Who sitt'st enthroned above the radiant stars,
 Look down : for if thou view not this, though deemed
 Omnipotent, thou art a thing of nought.

Exeunt POLYPHEME, ULYSSES, and SILENUS.

1st SEMICHOR. That insatiate throat expand,
 Boiled and roast are now at hand
 For thee, O Cyclops, to devour :
 From the coals in evil hour

Yet reeking, shall thy teeth divide
 The limbs of each unhappy guest,
 To thy table served when dressed
 In dishes formed of shaggy hide.
 O betray me not, my friend,
 For I on you alone depend :

Now approach the shades of night,
 Launch the bark, and aid our flight.

2nd SEMICHOR. Thou cave, and ye unholy rites,
 Adieu, the Cyclops' cursed delights,
 Who on his prisoners wont to feed,
 Hath banished pity from his breast.
 Inhuman execrable deed !
 On his own hearth, the suppliant guest,
 Regardless of the Lares' guardian powers,
 Now he slays, and now devours :
 Hot from the coals, with odious jaws,
 Human flesh the miscreant gnaws.

ULYSSES, CHORUS.

ULY. How, mighty Jove ! shall I express myself ?
 The dreadful scenes I in the cave have viewed
 Are so astonishing, they more resemble
 Some fable than the actions of a man.

CHOR. What now, Ulysses, on your loved companions
 Feasts this most impious Cyclops ?

ULY. Two, the fattest,
 Having well viewed and poised them in his hands——

CHOR. How did you bear, O miserable man,
 These cruel outrages ?

ULY. Soon as we entered
 The rocky cave, he lighted first the fire,
 On the wide blaze heaped trunks of lofty oaks,
 A load sufficient for three wains to bear ;
 Then near the flaming hearth, upon the ground,
 Arranged his couch of pine leaves, filled a bowl,
 Holding about ten firkins, with the milk
 Of heifers, and beside it placed a jug
 Adorned with ivy, the circumference seemed
 Three spacious ells, the depth no less than four :
 Then made his cauldron bubble, and reached down
 Spits burnt at the extremities, and polished
 Not with a knife, but hatchets ; Ætna furnished
 Such instruments for sacrifice, the stems
 Of thorn. No sooner had the hellish cook
 Finished his preparations, than he seized
 Two of my valiant comrades, whom he slew
 With calm deliberation ; one he cast
 Into the hollow cauldron ; from the ground
 Then lifting up his fellow by the foot

Dashed out his brains against the pointed rock ;
 Severing his flesh with an enormous knife,
 Part at the fire he roasted, and to boil,
 His other joints into the cauldron threw.
 But I, though from these eyes full many a tear
 Burst forth, approached the Cyclops, and on him
 Attended, while my friends, like timorous birds
 Lurked in the distant crannies of the rock,
 And all the blood forsook their pallid frame.
 When sated with his feast the monster lay
 Supine, and snored, a thought by Heaven inspired
 Entered this bosom ; having filled a cup
 With Maron's juice unmingled, I to him
 Bore it, that he might drink ; and cried, " Behold,
 O Cyclops, son of Neptune, how divine
 The beverage which our Grecian vineyards yield
 The stream of Bacchus." But already g'utted
 With his abominable food, he seized
 And emptied the whole bumper at one draught,
 Then lifting up, in token of applause,
 His hand : " O dearest stranger," he exclaimed,
 " To a delicious banquet thou hast added
 Delicious wine." Perceiving he grew merry
 I plied him with a second cup, well knowing
 That wine will stagger him : he soon shall feel
 Such punishment as he deserves. He sung ;
 I poured forth more and more, to warm his bowels
 With strong potations : 'midst my weeping crew
 He makes the cave with unharmonious strains
 Re-echo. But I silently came forth,
 And, if ye give consent, design to save
 You, and myself. Say, therefore, will ye fly
 From this unsocial monster, and reside
 With Grecian maids beneath the roofs of Bacchus ?
 Your sire within approves of these proposals :
 But now grown feeble and o'ercharged with wine,
 Attracted by the goblet, as if birdlime
 Had smeared his wings, he wavers. But with me
 Do thou preserve thyself, for thou art young :
 And I to Bacchus, to thy ancient friend
 Far different from this Cyclops, will restore thee.
 CHOR. My dearest friend, O could we see that day,
 And 'scape yon impious monster ! for we long
 Have been deprived of the enlivening bowl,
 Nor entertain a single hope of freedom.
 ULY. Now hear the means by which I can requite
 This odious savage, and thou too mayst 'scape
 From servitude.
 CHOR. Speak, for we should not hear

The sound of Asia's harp with more delight,
Than the glad tidings of the Cyclops' death.

ULY. By wine enlivened, he resolves to go
And revel with his brethren.

CHOR. I perceive
You mean to seize and kill him when alone,
By some enchantment, or to dash him headlong
From the steep rock.

ULY. I have no such design
As these: on craft alone my plan depends.

CHOR. How then will you proceed? For we long since
Have heard that you for wisdom are renowned.

ULY. I will deter him from the feast, and say
He must not portion out among the Cyclops
This liquor, but reserve it for himself
And lead a joyous life: when overcome
By Bacchus' gifts he sleeps, this sword shall point
An olive pole, which to my purpose suited
Lies in the cave: I in the fire will heat,
And, when it flames, direct the hissing brand
Full on the Cyclops' forehead, to extinguish
The orb of sight. As when some artist frames
A nautic structure, he by thongs directs
The ponderous auger: thus will I whirl round
Within the Cyclops' eye the kindled staff,
And scorch his visual nerve.

CHOR. Ho! I rejoice;
This blest invention almost makes me frantic.

ULY. Thee, and thy friends, and thy decrepit sire,
This done, aboard my vessel will I place,
And from this region with a double tier
Of oars convey.

CHOR. But is it possible
That I, as if dread Jove were my confederate,
Shall guide the well-poised brand, and of his eyesight
Deprive the monster? For I wish to share
In such assassination.

ULY. I expect
Your aid: the brand is weighty, and requires
Our social efforts.

CHOR. I'd sustain a load
Equal to what a hundred teams convey,
Could I dash out the cursed Cyclops' eye
E'en as a swarm of wasps.

ULY. Be silent now;
(Ye know my stratagem) and at my bidding
To those who o'er th' adventurous scheme preside
Yield prompt obedience: for I scorn to leave
My friends within, and save this single life.

True, 'scape I might, already having passed
 The cavern's deep recess : but it were mean
 If I should extricate myself alone,
 False to the faithful partners of my voyage.

[*Exit* ULYSSES.]

CHOR. Who first, who next, with steadfast hand
 Ordained to guide the flaming brand,
 The Cyclops' radiant eye shall pierce?

1st SEMICHOR. Silence ! for from within a song
 Bursts on my ear in tuneless verse,
 Insensate minstrel, doomed ere long
 This luxurious meal to rue,
 He staggers from yon rocky cave.
 Him let us teach who never knew
 How at the banquet to behave,
 Outrageous and unmannered hind,
 Soon shall he totally be blind.

2nd SEMICHOR. Thrice blest is he, in careless play
 'Midst Bacchus' orgies ever gay,
 Stretched near the social board whence glides
 The vine's rich juice in purple tides,
 Who fondly clasps with eager arms
 The consenting virgin's charms ;
 Rich perfumes conspire to shed
 Sweetest odours on his head,
 While enamoured of the fair
 He wantons with her auburn hair.
 But hark ! for surely 'tis our mate
 Exclaiming, " Who will ope the gate ? "

POLYPHEMÉ, ULYSSES, SILENUS, CHORUS.

POL. Ha ! ha ! I am replete with wine, the banquet
 Hath cheered my soul : like a well-freighted ship
 My stomach's with abundant viands stowed
 Up to my very chin. This smiling turf
 Invites me to partake a vernal feast
 With my Cyclopean brothers. Stranger, bring
 That vessel from the cave.

[*Exit* ULYSSES.]

CHOR. With bright-eyed grace
 Our master issues from his spacious hall ;
 (Some god approves—the kindled torch—) that form
 Equals the lustre of a blooming nymph
 Fresh from the dripping caverns of the main.
 Soon shall the variegated wreath adorn
 Your temples.

ULY. [*returning.*] Hear me, Cyclops ; well I know
 Th' effect of this potation, Bacchus' gift,
 Which I to you dispensed.

POL. Yet say what sort
Of god is Bacchus by his votaries deemed?
ULY. The greatest source of pleasure to mankind.
POL. I therefore to my palate find it sweet.
ULY. A god like this to no man will do wrong.
POL. But in a bottle how can any god
Delight to dwell?

ULY. In whatsoever place
We lodge him, the benignant power resides.
POL. The skins of goats are an unseemly lodging
For deities.

ULY. If you admire the wine,
Why quarrel with its case?

POL. Those filthy hides
I utterly detest, but love the liquor.

ULY. Stay here; drink, drink, O Cyclops, and be gay.

POL. This luscious beverage, must I not impart
To cheer my brothers?

ULY. Keep it to yourself
And you shall seem more honourable.

POL. More useful,
If I distribute largely to my friends.

ULY. Broils, taunts, and discord from the banquet rise.

POL. Though I am fuddled, no man dares to touch me.

ULY. He who hath drunk too freely, O my friend,
Ought to remain at home.

POL. Devoid of reason
Is he who when he drinks pays no regard
To mirth and to good-fellowship.

ULY. More wise,
O'ercharged with wine, who ventures not abroad.

POL. Shall we stay here? What think'st thou, O
Silenus?

SIL. With all my heart. What need, for our carousals,
Of a more numerous company?

POL. The ground
Beneath our feet, a flowery turf adorns.

SIL. O how delightful 'tis to drink, and bask
Here in the sunshine: on this grassy couch
Beside me take your seat.

POL. Why dost thou place
The cup behind my elbow?

SIL. Lest some stranger
Should come and snatch the precious boon away.

POL. Thou mean'st to tope clandestinely: between us
Here let it stand. O stranger, by what name
Say shall I call thee?

ULY. Noman is my name.
But for what favour shall I praise your kindness?

POL. The last of all the crew will I devour.

ULY. A wondrous privilege is this, O Cyclops,
Which on the stranger you bestow.

POL. What mean'st thou?
Ha! art thou drinking up the wine by stealth?

SIL. Only the gentle Bacchus gave that kiss,
Because I look so blooming.

POL. Thou shalt weep,
Because thy lips were to the wine applied,
Nor did it seek thy mouth.

SIL. Not thus, by Jove;
I drank because the generous god of wine
Declared that he admired me for my beauty.

POL. Pour forth; give me a bumper.

SIL. I must taste
To see what mixture it requires.

POL. Damnation!
Give it me pure.

SIL. Not so, the heavens forbid!
Till you the wreath bind on your ample front,
And I again have tasted.

POL. What a knave
Is this my cupbearer!

SIL. Accuse me not;
The wine is sweet: you ought to wipe your mouth
Before you drink.

POL. My lips and beard are clean.

SIL. Loll thus upon your elbow with a grace,
Drink as you see me drink, and imitate
My every gesture.

POL. What art thou about?

SIL. I swallowed then a most delicious bumper.

POL. Take thou the cask, O stranger, and perform
The office of my cupbearer.

ULY. These hands
Have been accustomed to the pleasing office.

POL. Now pour it forth.

ULY. Be silent: I obey.

POL. Thou hast proposed a difficult restraint
To him who largely drinks.

ULY. Now drain the bowl;
Leave nought behind: the toper must not prate
Before his liquor's ended.

POL. In the vine
There's wisdom.

ULY. When to plenteous food you add
An equal share of liquor, and well drench
The throat beyond what thirst demands, you sink
Into sweet sleep: but if you leave behind

Aught of th' unfinished beverage in your cup,
Bacchus will scorch your entrails.

POL. 'Tis a mercy
How I swam out ; the very heavens whirl round
Mingled with earth. I view Jove's throne sublime,
And the whole synod of encircling gods.
Were all the Graces to solicit me,
I would not kiss them : Ganymede himself
Appears in matchless beauty.

SIL. I, O Cyclops,
Am Jove's own Ganymede.

POL. By Heaven thou art !
Whom from the realms of Dardanus I bore.

[Exit POLYPHEME.]

SIL. Ruin awaits me.

CHOR. Dost thou loathe him now

SIL. Ah me ! I from this sleep shall soon behold
The most accursed effects. [Exit SILENUS.]

ULY. Come on, ye sons
Of Bacchus, generous youths ; for soon dissolved
In slumber shall the monster from those jaws
Vomit forth flesh, within the hall now smokes
The brand, and nought remains but to burn out
The Cyclops' eye : act only like a man.

CHOR. The firmness of my soul shall equal rocks
And adamant. But go into the cave
With speed, before tumultuous sounds assail
Our aged father's ears ; for to effect
Your purpose, all is ready.

ULY. Vulcan, king
Of Ætna, from this impious pest, who haunts
Thy sacred mountain, free thyself at once,
By burning out his glaring eye ; and thou
Nurtured by sable night, O sleep, invade
With thy resistless force this beast abhorred
By Heaven ; nor after all the glorious deeds
Achieved at Ilion, with his faithful sailors,
Destroy Ulysses' self, by him who heeds
Nor god nor mortal. Else must we hold fortune
A goddess, and all other deities
Inferior to resistless fortune's power. [Exit ULYSSES.]

CHOR. The neck of him who slays his guest,
With burning pincers shall be prest,
And fire bereaving him of sight
Soon shall destroy that orb of light.
Within the embers near at hand
Lies concealed a smoking brand,
Torn from its parental tree.
Maron, we depend on thee ;

CHOR. Your right.

POL. Where, where ?

CHOR. Upon that very rock.
Have you yet caught them ?

POL. To mischance succeeds
Mischance ; I have fallen down and cracked my skull.

CHOR. They 'scape you now.

POL. Ye misinformed me sure ;
They are not here.

CHOR. I say not that they are.

POL. Where then ?

CHOR. They wheel around you on your left.

POL. Ah me ! I am derided, ye but mock
At my affliction.

CHOR. They are there no longer :
But Noman stands before you.

POL. O thou villain,
Where art thou ?

ULYSSES, POLYPHEME, CHORUS.

ULY. Keeping cautiously aloof,
Thus I, Ulysses, guard my threatened life.

POL. What saidst thou ? Wherefore hast thou changed
thy name

T' assume a new one ?

ULY. Me my father named
Ulysses. It was destined you should suffer
A just requital for your impious feast ;
For I in vain had with consuming flames
Laid Ilion waste, had I forborne t' avenge
On you the murder of my valiant friends.

POL. Now is that ancient oracle, alas !
Accomplished, which foretold, that I by thee,
On thy return from Troy, should be deprived
Of sight : but that thou also for a deed
So cruel, shalt be punished, and full long
Endure the beating of tempestuous waves.

ULY. Go weep, my actions justify these words.
But to the shore I haste ; and to my country
Will steer the vessel o'er Sicilia's waves.

POL. Thou shalt not ; with this fragment of the rock
Hurled at thy head, thee and thy perjured crew
Will I demolish : for I yet, though blind,
Can mount the cliff which overhangs the port,
And in its wonted crannies fix my steps.

CHOR. But we, blest partners in Ulysses' voyage,
Henceforth the laws of Bacchus will obey.

HELEN.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

HELEN.
TEUCER.
CHORUS OF GRECIAN DAMES
(HELEN'S ATTENDANTS).
MENELAUS.

FEMALE SERVANT.
MESSENGER.
THEOCLYMENUS.
THEONOE.
CASTOR AND POLLUX.

SCENE.—PROTEUS' TOMB, AT THE ENTRANCE OF THEOCLYMENUS' PALACE IN PHAROS, AN ISLAND AT THE MOUTH OF THE NILE.

HELEN.

BRIGHT are these virgin currents of the Nile
Which water Egypt's soil, and are supplied,
Instead of drops from heaven, by molten snow.
But Proteus, while he lived, of these domains
Was lord, he in the isle of Pharos dwelt,
King of all Ægypt; for his wife he gained
One of the nymphs who haunt the briny deep,
Fair Psamathe, after she left the bed
Of Æacus; she in the palace bore
To him two children, one of them a son
Called Theoclymenus, because his life
Is passed in duteous homage to the gods;
A daughter also of majestic mien,
Her mother's darling, in her infant years
(Eidothea called by her enraptured sire):
But when the blooming maid became mature
For nuptial joys, Theonoe was the name
They gave her; all the counsels of the gods,
The present and the future, well she knew,
Such privilege she from her grandsire Nereus
Inherited. But not to fame unknown
Are Sparta's realm, whence I derive my birth,
And my sire, Tyndarus. There prevails a rumour
That to my mother Leda Jove was borne
On rapid wings, the figure of a swan

Assuming, and by treachery gained admission
To her embraces, flying from an eagle,
If we may credit such report. My name
Is Helen ; but I also will recount
What woes I have endured ; three goddesses,
For beauty's prize contending, in the cave
Of Ida, came to Paris ; Juno, Venus,
And Pallas, virgin progeny of Jove,
Requesting him to end their strife, and judge
Whose charms outshone her rivals. But proposing
For a reward, my beauty (if the name
Of beauty suit this inauspicious form)
And promising in marriage to bestow me
On Paris, Venus conquered : for the swain
Of Ida, leaving all his herds behind,
Expecting to receive me for his bride,
To Sparta came. But Juno, whose defeat
Fired with resentment her indignant soul,
Our nuptials frustrated ; for to the arms
Of royal Priam's son, she gave not me,
But in my semblance formed a living image
Composed of ether. Paris falsely deemed
That he possessed me ; from that time these ills
Have been increased by the decrees of Jove,
For he with war hath visited the realms
Of Greece, and Phrygia's miserable sons,
That he might lighten from th' unrighteous swarms
Of its inhabitants the groaning earth,
And on the bravest of the Grecian chiefs
Confer renown. While in the Phrygian war,
As the reward of their victorious arms,
I to the host of Greece have been displayed,
Though absent, save in likeness and in name.
But Mercury, receiving me in folds
Of air, and covering with a cloud (for Jove
Was not unmindful of me), in this house
Of royal Proteus, who of all mankind
Was in his judgment the most virtuous, placed me,
That undefiled I might preserve the bed
Of Menelaus. I indeed am here ;
But with collected troops my hapless lord
Pursues the ravisher to Ilion's towers.
Beside Scamander's stream hath many a chief
Died in my cause ; but I, who have endured
All these afflictions, am a public curse ;
For 'tis supposed, that treacherous to my lord,
I have through Greece blown up the flames of war.
Why then do I prolong my life ? these words
I heard from Mercury : " That I again

In Sparta, with my husband shall reside,
 When he discovers that I never went
 To Troy :” he therefore counselled me to keep
 A spotless chastity. While Proteus viewed
 The solar beams, I from the nuptial yoke
 Still lived exempt ; but since the darksome grave
 Hath covered his remains, the royal son
 Of the deceased solicits me to wed him :
 But honouring my first husband, at this tomb
 Of Proteus, I a suppliant kneel, to him,
 To him I sue, to guard my nuptial couch,
 That if through Greece I bear a name assailed
 By foul aspersions, no unseemly deed
 May cover me with real infamy.

TEUCER, HELEN.

TEU. Who rules this fortress ? such a splendid dome
 With royal porticos and blazoned roofs
 Seems worthy of a Plutus for its lord.
 But, O ye gods, what vision ! I behold
 That hateful woman who hath ruined me,
 And all the Greeks. Heaven’s vengeance on thy head !
 Such a resemblance bear’st thou to that Helen,
 That if I were not in a foreign land,
 I with this stone would smite thee ; thou shouldst bleed
 For being like Jove’s daughter.

HEL. Wretched man,
 Whoe’er you are, why do you hate me thus
 Because of her misfortunes ?

TEU. I have erred
 In giving way to such unseemly rage.
 All Greece abhors Jove’s daughter. But forgive me,
 O woman, for the words which I have uttered.

HEL. Say who you are, and from what land you come ?

TEU. One of that miserable race the Greeks.

HEL. No wonder is it then, if you detest
 The Spartan Helen. But to me declare,
 Who are you, whence, and from what father sprung ?

TEU. My name is Teucer, Telamon my sire ;
 The land which nurtured me is Salamis.

HEL. But wherefore do you wander o’er these meads
 Laved by the Nile ?

TEU. I from my native land
 Am banished.

HEL. You, alas ! must needs be wretched.
 Who drove you thence ?

TEU. My father Telamon.
 What friend canst thou hold dearer ?

HEL. For what cause

Were you to exile doomed ? your situation
Is most calamitous.

TEU. My brother Ajax,
Who died at Troy, was author of my ruin.

HEL. How ? by your sword deprived of life ?

TEU. He fell,
On his own blade, and perished.

HEL. Was he mad ?
Who could act thus whose intellects are sound ?

TEU. Know'st thou Achilles, Peleus' son ?

HEL. He erst,
I heard, to Helen as a suitor came.

TEU. He, at his death, his comrades left to strive
Which should obtain his arms.

HEL. But why was this
Hurtful to Ajax ?

TEU. When another won
Those arms, he gave up life.

HEL. Do your afflictions
Rise from his fate ?

TEU. Because I died not with him.

HEL. O stranger, went you then to Troy's famed city ?

TEU. And having shared in laying waste its bulwarks,
I also perished.

HEL. Have the flames consumed,
And utterly destroyed them ?

TEU. Not a trace
Of those proud walls is now to be discerned.

HEL. Through thee, O Helen, do the Phrygians perish.

TEU. The Greeks too : for most grievous are the mischiefs
Which have been wrought.

HEL. What length of time's elapsed
Since Troy was sacked ?

TEU. Seven times the fruitful year
Hath almost turned around her lingering wheel.

HEL. But how much longer did your host remain
Before those bulwarks ?

TEU. Many a tedious moon ;
There full ten years were spent.

HEL. And have ye taken
That Spartan dame ?

TEU. By her dishevelled hair,
Th' adult'ress, Menelaus dragged away.

HEL. Did you behold that object of distress,
Or speak you from report ?

TEU. These eyes as clearly
Witnessed the whole, as I now view thy face.

HEL. Be cautious, lest for her ye should mistake
Some well-formed semblance which the gods have sent.

TEU. Talk if thou wilt on any other subject;
No more of her.

HEL. Believe you this opinion
To be well-grounded?

TEU. With these eyes I saw her,
And she e'en now is present to my soul.

HEL. Have Menelaus and his consort reached
Their home.

TEU. They are not in the Argive land,
Nor on Eurotas' banks.

HEL. Alas! alas!
The tale you have recounted, is to her
Who hears you, an event most inauspicious.

TEU. He and his consort, both they say are dead.

HEL. Did not the Greeks in one large squadron sail?

TEU. Yes; but a storm dispersed their shattered fleet.

HEL. Where were they, in what seas?

TEU. They at that time
Through the mid waves of the Ægean deep
Were passing.

HEL. Can none tell if Menelaus
Escaped this tempest?

TEU. No man; but through Greece
'Tis rumoured he is dead.

HEL. I am undone.
Is Thestius' daughter living?

TEU. Mean'st thou Leda?
She with the dead is numbered.

HEL. Did the shame
Of Helen cause her wretched mother's death?

TEU. Around her neck, 'tis said the noble dame
Entwined the gliding noose.

HEL. But live the sons
Of Tyndarus, or are they too now no more?

TEU. They are, and are not, dead; for two accounts
Are propagated.

HEL. Which is best confirmed?
O wretched me!

TEU. Some say that they are gods
Under the semblance of two radiant stars.

HEL. Well have you spoken. But what else is rumoured?

TEU. That on account of their lost sister's guilt
They died by their own swords. But of these themes
Enough: I wish not to renew my sorrows.

But O assist me in the great affairs
On which I to these royal mansions came,
Wishing to see the prophetess Theonoe,
And learn, from Heaven's oracular response,
How I may steer my vessel with success

To Cyprus' isle, where Phœbus hath foretold
That I shall dwell, and on the walls I rear
Bestow the name of Salamis, yet mindful
Of that dear country I have left behind!

HEL. This will your voyage of itself explain :
But fly from these inhospitable shores,
Ere Proteus' son, the ruler of this land,
Behold you : fly, for he is absent now
Pursuing with his hounds the savage prey.
He slays each Grecian stranger who becomes
His captive : ask not why, for I am silent ;
And what could it avail you to be told ?

TEU. O woman, most discreetly hast thou spoken ;
Thy kindness may the righteous gods repay !
For though thy person so resemble Helen,
Thou hast a soul unlike that worthless dame.
Perdition seize her ; never may she reach
The current of Eurotas : but mayst thou,
Most generous woman, be for ever blest. [*Exit TEUCER.*]

HEL. Plunged as I am 'midst great and piteous woes,
How shall I frame the plaintive strain, what Muse
With tears, or doleful elegies, invoke ?

ODE.

I. 1.

Ye syrens, winged daughters of the earth,
Come and attune the sympathetic string,
Expressive now no more of mirth,
To soothe my griefs, the flute of Libya bring ;
Record the tortures which this bosom rend,
And echo back my elegiac strains :
Proserpine next will I invoke, to send
Numbers adapted to her votary's pains ;
So shall her dark abode, while many a tear I shed,
Waft the full dirge to soothe th' illustrious dead.

CHORUS, HELEN.

CHORUS.

I. 2.

Near the cerulean margin of our streams
I stood, and on the tufted herbage spread
My purple vestments in those beams
Which from his noontide orb Hyperion shed,
When on a sudden from the waving reeds
I heard a plaintive and unwelcome sound
Of bitter lamentation ; o'er the meads
Groans inarticulate were poured around :
*Beneath the rocky cave, dear scene of past delight,
Some Naiad thus bewails Pan's hasty flight.*

HELEN.

II. 1.

Ye Grecian nymphs, whom those barbarians caught,
 And from your native land reluctant bore,
 The tidings which yon sailor brought
 Call forth these tears; for Ilium is no more,
 By him of Ida, that predicted flame
 Destroyed; through me, alas! have myriads bled,
 If not through me, through my detested name.
 By th' ignominious noose is Leda dead
 Who my imaginary guilt deplored;
 And doomed by the relentless Fates in vain
 To tedious wanderings, my unhappy lord
 At length hath perished 'midst the billowy main:
 'The twin protectors of their native land,
 Castor and Pollux, from all human eyes
 Are vanished, they have left Eurotas' strand,
 And fields, in playful strife where each young wrestler vies.

CHORUS.

II. 2.

My royal mistress, your disastrous fate
 With many a groan and fruitless tear I mourn.
 I from that hour your sorrows date
 When amorous Jove on snowy pinions borne,
 In form a swan, by Leda was caressed.
 Is there an evil you have not endured?
 Your mother is no more, through you unblest
 Are Jove's twin sons. Nor have your vows procured
 Of your dear country the enchanting sight.
 A rumour too through various realms hath spread,
 Caught by the envious vulgar with delight,
 Assigning you to the barbarian's bed.
 Amid the waves, far from the wished-for shore,
 Your husband hath been buried in the main.
 You shall behold your native walls no more
 Nor under burnished roofs your wonted state maintain.

HELEN.

III.

What Phrygian artist on the top of Ide,
 Or vagrant of a Grecian line,
 Felled that inauspicious pine,
 To frame the bark which Paris o'er the tide
 Dared with barbaric oars to guide,

When to my palace, in an evil hour
 Caught by beauty's magic power,
 He came to seize me for his bride?
 But crafty Venus, authoress of these broils,
 Marched thither, leagued with death, t' annoy
 Triumphant Greece and vanquished Troy,
 (Wretch that I am, consumed with endless toils!)
 And Juno seated on her golden throne,

Consort of thundering Jove,
 Sent Hermes from the realms above,
 Who found me, when I carelessly had strewn
 Leaves plucked from roses in my vest,
 As Minerva's votary drest;
 He bore me through the paths of air
 To this loathed, this dreary land,
 Called Greece, and Priam's friends the strife to share,
 And roused to bloody deeds each rival band;
 Where Simois' current glides, my name
 Hence is marked with groundless shame.

CHOR. Your woes I know are grievous: but to bear
 With tranquil mind the necessary ills
 Of life, is most expedient.

HEL. To what ills
 Have I been subject, O my dear companions!
 Did not my mother, as a prodigy
 Which wondering mortals gaze at, bring me forth?
 For neither Grecian nor barbaric dame
 Till then produced an egg, in which her children
 Enveloped lay, as they report, from Jove
 Leda engendered. My whole life and all
 That hath befallen me, but conspires to form
 One series of miraculous events;
 To Juno some, and to my beauty some,
 Are owing. Would to Heaven, that, like a tablet
 Whose picture is effaced, I could exchange
 This form for one less comely, since the Greeks
 Forgetting those abundant gifts showered down
 By prosperous Fortune which I now possess,
 Think but of what redounds not to my honour,
 And still remember my ideal shame.
 Whoever therefore, with one single species
 Of misery is afflicted by the gods,
 Although the weight of Heaven's chastising hand
 Be grievous, may with fortitude endure
 Such visitation: but by many woes
 Am I oppressed, and first of all exposed
 To slanderous tongues, although I ne'er have erred.
 It were a lesser evil e'en to sin
 Than be suspected falsely. Then the gods,

'Midst men of barbarous manners, placed me far
From my loved country : torn from every friend,
I languish here, to servitude consigned
Although of free born race : for 'midst barbarians
Are all enslaved but one, their haughty lord.
My fortunes had this single anchor left,
Perchance my husband might at length arrive
To snatch me from my woes ; but he, alas !
Is now no more, my mother too is dead,
And I am deemed her murd'ress, though unjustly,
Yet am I branded with this foul reproach ;
And she who was the glory of our house,
My daughter in the virgin state grown grey,
Still droops unwedded : my illustrious brothers,
Castor and Pollux, called the sons of Jove,
Are now no more. But I impute my death,
Crushed as I am by all these various woes,
Not to my own misdeeds, but to the power
Of adverse fortune only : this one danger
There yet remains, if at my native land
I should again arrive, they will confine me
In a close dungeon, thinking me that Helen
Who dwelt in Ilion, till she thence was borne
By Menelaus. Were my husband living,
We might have known each other, by producing
Those tokens to which none beside are privy :
But this will never be, nor can he e'er
Return in safety. To what purpose then
Do I still lengthen out this wretched being ?
To what new fortunes am I still reserved ?
Shall I select a husband, but to vary
My present ills, to dwell beneath the roof
Of a barbarian, at luxurious boards
With wealth abounding, seated ? for the dame
Whom wedlock couples with the man she hates
Death is the best expedient. But with glory
How shall I die ? the fatal noose appears
To be so base, that e'en in slaves 'tis held
Unseemly thus to perish ; in the poniard
There's somewhat great and generous. But to me
Delays are useless : welcome instant death :
Into such depth of misery am I plunged.
For beauty renders other women blest,
But hath to me the source of ruin proved.

CHOR. O Helen, whosoe'er the stranger be
Who hither came, believe not that the whole
Of what he said, is truth.

HEL. But in plain terms
Hath he announced my dearest husband's death.

CHOR. The false assertions which prevail, are many.

HEL. Clear is the language in which honest Truth
Loves to express herself.

CHOR. You are inclined
Rather to credit inauspicious tidings
Than those which are more favourable.

HEL. By fears
Encompassed, am I hurried to despair.

CHOR. What hospitable treatment have you found
Beneath these roofs?

HEL. All here, except the man
Who seeks to wed me, are my friends.

CHOR. You know
How then to act : leave this sepulchral gloom,

HEL. What are the counsels, or the cheering words
You wish to introduce?

CHOR. Go in, and question
The daughter of the Nereid, her who knows
All hidden truths, Theonoe, if your lord
Yet live, or view the solar beams no more :
And when you have learnt this, as suit your fortunes
Indulge your joys, or pour forth all your tears :
But ere you know aught fully, what avail
Your sorrows ? therefore listen to my words ;
Leaving this tomb, attend the maid : from her
Shall you know all. But why should you look farther
When truth is in these mansions to be found ?
With you the doors I'll enter ; we together
The royal virgin's oracles will hear.
For 'tis a woman's duty to exert
Her utmost efforts in a woman's cause.

HEL. My friends, your wholesome counsels I approve :
But enter ye these doors, that ye, within
The palace, my calamities may hear

CHOR. You summon her who your commands obeys
Without reluctance.

HEL. Woeful day ! ah me,
What lamentable tidings shall I hear ?

CHOR. Forbear these plaintive strains, my dearest queen,
Nor with presaging soul anticipate
Evils to come.

HEL. What hath my wretched lord
Endured ? Doth he yet view the light, the sun
Borne in his radiant chariot, and the paths
Of all the starry train ? Or hath he shared
The common lot of mortals, is he plunged
Among the dead, beneath th' insatiate grave ?

CHOR. O construe what time yet may bring to pass
In the most favourable terms.

HEL. On thee
I call to testify, and thee adjure,
Eurotas, on whose verdant margin grow
The waving reeds : O tell me, if my lord
Be dead, as fame avers.

CHOR. Why do you utter
These incoherent ditties ?

HEL. Round my neck
The deadly noose will I entwine, or drive
With my own hand a poinard through my breast ;
For I was erst the cause of bloody strife ;
But now am I a victim, to appease
The wrath of those three goddesses who strove
On Ida's mount, when 'midst the stalls where fed
His lowing herds, the son of Priam waked
The sylvan reed, to celebrate my beauty.

CHOR. Cause these averted ills, ye gods, to light
On other heads ; but, O my royal mistress,
May you be happy.

HEL. Thou, O wretched Troy,
To crimes which thou hast ne'er committed, ow'st
Thy ruin, and those horrible disasters
Thou hast endured. For as my nuptial gifts,
Hath Venus caused an intermingled stream
Of blood and tears to flow, she, griefs to griefs
And tears to tears hath added ; all these sufferings
Have been the miserable Ilion's lot.
Of their brave sons the mothers were bereft
The virgin sisters of the mighty dead
Strewed their shorn tresses on Scamander's banks,
While, by repeated shrieks, victorious Greece
Her woes expressing, smote her laurelled head,
And with her nails deep furrowing tore her cheeks.
Happy Calisto, thou Arcadian nymph
Who didst ascend the couch of Jove, transformed
To a four-footed savage, far more blest
Art thou than she to whom I owe my birth :
For thou beneath the semblance of a beast,
Thy tender limbs with shaggy hide o'erspread,
And glaring with stern visage, by that change
Didst end thy griefs. She too whom Dian drove
Indignant from her choir, that hind whose horns
Were tipped with gold, the bright Titanian maid,
Daughter of Merops, to her beauty owed
That transformation : but my charms have ruined
Both Troy and the unhappy Grecian host.
[*Exeunt* HELEN and CHORUS.]

MENELAUS.

O Pelops, in the strife on Pisa's field,
Who didst outstrip the fiery steeds that whirled
The chariot of Oenomaus, would to Heaven
That when thy severed limbs before the gods
Were at the banquet placed, thou then thy life
Amidst the blest immortal powers hadst closed,
Ere thou my father Atreus didst beget,
Whose issue by his consort *Ærope*
Were Agamemnon and myself, two chiefs
Of high renown. No ostentatious words
Are these ; but such a numerous host, I deem,
As that which we to Ilion's shore conveyed,
Ne'er stemmed the tide before ; these troops their king
Led not by force to combat, but bore rule
O'er Grecian youths his voluntary subjects,
And among these, some heroes, now no more,
May we enumerate ; others from the sea
Who 'scaped with joy, and to their homes returned,
E'en after fame had classed them with the dead.
But I, most wretched, o'er the briny waves
Of ocean wander, since I have o'erthrown
The battlements of Troy, and though I wish
Again to reach my country ; by the gods
Am I esteemed unworthy of such bliss.
E'en to the Libyan deserts have I sailed,
And traversed each inhospitable scene
Of brutal outrage ; still as I approach
My country, the tempestuous winds repel me,
Nor hath a prosperous breeze from Heaven yet filled
My sails, to waft me to the Spartan coast :
And now a shipwrecked, miserable man,
Reft of my friends, I on these shores am cast,
My vessel hath been shivered 'gainst the rocks
Into a thousand fragments : on the keel,
The only part which yet remains entire
Of all that fabric, scarce could I and Helen,
Whom I from Troy have borne, escape with life
Through fortunes unforeseen : but of this land
And its inhabitants, the name I know not :
For with the crowd I blushed to intermingle
Lest they my squalid garments should observe,
Through shame my wants concealing. For the man
Of an exalted station, when assailed
By adverse fortune, having never learned
How to endure calamity, is plunged
Into a state far worse than he whose woes
Have been of ancient date. But pinching need

Torments me : for I have not either food
 Or raiment to protect my shivering frame,
 Which may be guessed from these vile rags I wear
 Cast up from my wrecked vessel : for the sea
 Hath swallowed up my robes, my tissued vests,
 And every ensign of my former state.
 Within the dark recesses of a cave
 Having concealed my wife, that guilty cause
 Of all my woes, and my surviving friends
 Enjoined to guard her, hither am I come.
 Alone, in quest of necessary aid
 For my brave comrades whom I there have left,
 If by my search I haply can obtain it,
 I roam ; but when I viewed this house adorned
 With gilded pinnacles, and gates that speak
 The riches of their owner, I advanced :
 For I have hopes that from this wealthy mansion
 I, somewhat for my sailors, shall obtain.
 But they who want the necessary comforts
 Of life, although they are disposed to aid us,
 Yet have not wherewithal. Ho ! who comes forth
 From yonder gate, my doleful tale to bear
 Into the house ?

FEMALE SERVANT, MENELAUS.

FEMALE SER. Who at the threshold stands ?
 Wilt thou not hence depart, lest thy appearance
 Before these doors give umbrage to our lords ?
 Else shalt thou surely die, because thou cam'st
 From Greece, whose sons shall never hence return.

MEN. Well hast thou spoken, O thou aged dame.
 Wilt thou permit me ? For to thy behests
 Must I submit : but suffer me to speak.

FEMALE SER. Depart : for 'tis my duty to permit
 No Greek to enter this imperial dome.

MEN. Lift not thy hand against me, nor attempt
 To drive me hence by force.

FEMALE SER. Thou wilt not yield
 To my advice, thou therefore art to blame.

MEN. Carry my message to thy lords within.

FEMALE SER. I fear lest somewhat dreadful might ensue,
 Should I repeat your words.

MEN. I hither come
 A shipwrecked man, a stranger, one of those
 Whom all hold sacred.

FEMALE SER. To some other house,
 Instead of this, repair.

MEN. I am determined
 To enter : but comply with my request.

FEMALE SER. Be well assured thou art unwelcome here,
And shalt ere long by force be driven away.

MEN. Alas ! alas ! where are my valiant troops ?

FEMALE SER. Elsewhere, perhaps, thou wert a mighty man ;
But here art thou no longer such.

MEN. O Fortune,
How am I galled with undeserved reproach !

FEMALE SER. Why are those eyelids moist with tears, why
griev'st thou ?

MEN. Because I once was happy.

FEMALE SER. Then depart,
And mingle social tears with those thou lov'st.

MEN. But what domain is this, to whom belong
These royal mansions ?

FEMALE SER. Proteus here resides ;
This land is Egypt.

MEN. Egypt ? wretched me !
Ah, whither have I sailed !

FEMALE SER. But for what cause
Scorn'st thou the race of Nile ?

MEN. I scorn them not :
My own disastrous fortunes I bewail.

FEMALE SER. Many are wretched, thou in this respect
Art nothing singular.

MEN. Is he, the king
Thou speak'st of, here within ?

FEMALE SER. To him belongs
This tomb ; his son is ruler of this land.

MEN. But where is he : abroad, or in the palace ?

FEMALE SER. He's not within : but to the Greeks he bears
The greatest enmity.

MEN. Whence rose this hate,
Productive of such bitter fruits to me ?

FEMALE SER. Beneath these roofs Jove's daughter Helen
dwells.

MEN. What mean'st thou ? Ha ! what words with wonder
fraught
Are these which thou hast uttered ? O repeat them.

FEMALE SER. The child of Tyndarus, she who in the realm
Of Sparta erst abode.

MEN. Whence came she hither ?
How can this be ?

FEMALE SER. From Lacedæmon's realm.

MEN. When ? Hath my wife been torn from yonder cave ?

FEMALE SER. Before the Greeks, O stranger, went to Troy
Retreat then from these mansions, for within
happened a calamitous event,
which the palace is disturbed. Thou com'st
sonably, and if the king surprise thee,

Instead of hospitable treatment, death
Must be thy portion. To befriend the Greeks
Though well inclined, yet thee have I received
With these harsh words, because I fear the monarch.

[*Exit FEMALE SERVANT.*]

MEN. What shall I say? For I, alas! am told
Of present sorrows added to the past.
Come I not hither, after having borne
From vanquished Troy my consort, whom I left
Within yon cave well guarded? Yet here dwells
Another Helen, whom that woman called
Jove's daughter. Lives there on the banks of Nile
A man who bears the sacred name of Jove?
For in the heavens there's only one. What country,
But that where glides Eurotas' stream beset
With waving reeds, is Sparta? Tyndarus' name
Suits him alone. But is there any land
Synonymous with Lacedæmon's realm,
And that of Troy? I know not how to solve
This doubt; for there are many, it appears,
In various regions of the world, who bear
Like appellations; city corresponds
With city; woman borrows that of woman:
Nor must we therefore wonder. Yet again
Here will I stay, though danger be announced
By yonder aged servant at the door:
For there is no man so devoid of pity
As not to give me food, when he the name
Of Menelaus hears. That dreadful fire
By which the Phrygian bulwarks were consumed
Is memorable, and I who kindled it
Am known in every land. I'll therefore wait
Until the master of this house return.
But I have two expedients, and will practise
That which my safety shall require; of soul
Obdurate, if he prove, in my wrecked bark
Can I conceal myself, but if the semblance
Which he puts on, be mild, I for relief
From these my present miseries, will apply.
But this of all the woes that I endure
Is the most grievous, that from other kings
I, though a king myself, should be reduced
To beg my food: but thus hath Fate ordained.
Nor is it my assertion, but a maxim
Among the wise established, that there's nought
More powerful than the dread behests of Fate.

HELEN, CHORUS, MENELAUS.

CHOR. I heard what yon prophetic maid foretold,
 Who in the palace did unfold
 The oracles ; that to the shades profound
 Of Erebus, beneath the ground
 Interred, not yet hath Menelaus ta'en
 His passage : on the stormy main
 Still tossed, he cannot yet approach the strand,
 The haven of the Spartan land :
 The chief, who now his vagrant life bewails,
 Without a friend, unfurls his sails,
 From Ilion's realm to every distant shore
 Borne o'er the deep with luckless oar.

HEL. I to this hallowed tomb again repair,
 Now I have heard the grateful tidings uttered
 By sage Theonoe, who distinctly knows
 All that hath happened ? for she says my lord
 Is living, and yet views the solar beams :
 But after passing o'er unnumbered straits
 Of ocean, to a vagrant's wretched life
 Full long inured, on these Ægyptian coasts,
 When he his toils hath finished, shall arrive.
 Yet there is one thing more, which she hath left
 Unmentioned, whether he shall come with safety.
 This question I neglected to propose,
 O'erjoyed when she informed me he yet lives ;
 She also adds, that he is near the land,
 From his wrecked ship, with his few friends, cast forth,
 O mayst thou come at length ; for ever dear
 To me wilt thou arrive. Ha ! who is that ?
 Am not I caught, through some deceitful scheme
 Of Proteus' impious son, in hidden snares ?
 Like a swift courser, or the madding priestess
 Of Bacchus, shall I not with hasty step
 Enter the tomb, because his looks are fierce
 Who rushes on, and strives to overtake me ?

MEN. On thee I call, who to the yawning trench
 Around that tomb, and blazing altars hiest
 Precipitate. Stay : wherefore dost thou fly ?
 With what amazement doth thy presence strike
 And almost leave me speechless !

HEL. O my friends,
 I suffer violence ; for from the tomb
 I by this man am dragged, who to the king
 Will give me, from whose nuptial couch I fled.

MEN. We are no pirates, nor the ministers
 Of lustful villany.

HEL. Yet is the vest
You wear unseemly.
MEN. Stay thy rapid flight,
Dismiss thy fears.
HEL. I stop, now I have reached
This hallowed spot.
MEN. Say, woman, who thou art ;
What face do I behold ?
HEL. But who are you ?
For I by the same reasons am induced
To ask this question.
MEN. Never did I see
A greater likeness.
HEL. O ye righteous gods !
For 'tis a privilege the gods alone
Confer, to recognize our long-lost friends,
MEN. Art thou a Grecian or a foreign dame ?
HEL. Of Greece: but earnestly I wish to know
Whence you derive your origin.
MEN. In thee
A wonderful resemblance I discern
Of Helen.
HEL. Menelaus' very features
These eyes in you behold, still at a loss
Am I for words t' express my thoughts.
MEN. Full clearly
Hast thou discovered a most wretched man.
HEL. O to thy consort's arms at length restored !
MEN. To what a consort ? O forbear to touch
My garment !
HEL. E'en the same, whom to your arms,
A noble bride, my father Tyndarus gave.
MEN. Send forth, O Hecate, thou orb of light,
Some more benignant spectre.
HEL. You in me
Behold not one of those who minister
At Hecate's abhorred nocturnal rites.
MEN. Nor am I sure the husband of two wives.
HEL. Say, to whom else in wedlock are you joined ?
MEN. To her who lies concealed in yonder cave,
The prize I hither bring from vanquished Troy.
HEL. You have no wife but me.
MEN. If I retain
My reason yet, these eyes are sure deceived.
HEL. Seem you not then, while me you thus behold,
To view your real consort ?
MEN. Though your person
Resemble hers, no positive decision
Can I presume to form.

HEL. Observe me well,
And mark wherein we differ. Who can judge
With greater certainty than you?

MEN. Thou bear'st
Her semblance, I confess.

HEL. Who can inform you
Better than your own eyes?

MEN. What makes me doubt
Is this; because I have another wife.

HEL. To the domains of Troy I never went :
It was my image only.

MEN. Who can fashion
Such bodies, with the power of sight endued?

HEL. Composed of ether, you a consort have,
Heaven's workmanship.

MEN. Wrought by what plastic god?
For the events thou speak'st of are most wondrous.

HEL. Lest Paris should obtain me, this exchange
Was made by Juno.

MEN. How couldst thou be here,
At the same time, and in the Phrygian realm?

HEL. The name, but not the body, can be present
At once in many places.

MEN. O release me;
For I came hither in an evil hour.

HEL. Will you then leave me here, and bear away
That shadow of a wife?

MEN. Yet, O farewell,
Because thou art like Helen.

HEL. I'm undone :
For though my husband I again have found,
Yet shall not I possess him.

MEN. My conviction,
From all those grievous toils I have endured
At Ilion, I derive, and not from thee.

HEL. Ah, who is there more miserable than I am?
My dearest friends desert me : I, to Greece,
To my dear native land, shall ne'er return.

MESSENGER, MENELAUS, HELEN, CHORUS.

MES. After a tedious search, O Menelaus,
At length have I with difficulty found you,
But not till over all the wide extent
Of this barbaric region I had wandered;
Sent by the comrades whom you left behind.

MEN. Have ye been plundered then by the barbarians?

MES. A most miraculous event hath happened,
Yet less astonishing by far in name
Than in reality.

MEN. Speak, for thou bring'st
Important tidings by this breathless haste.

MES. My words are these : in vain have you endured
Unnumbered toils.

MEN. Those thou bewail'st are ills
Of ancient date. But what hast thou to tell me?

MES. Borne to the skies your consort from our sight
Hath vanished, in the heavens is she concealed,
Leaving the cave in which we guarded her,
When she these words had uttered : "O ye sons
Of hapless Phrygia, and of Greece : for me
Beside Scamander's conscious stream ye died,
Through Juno's arts, because ye falsely deemed
Helen by Phrygian Paris was possest :
But after having here remained on earth
My stated time, observing the decrees
Of Fate, I to my sire the liquid ether
Return : but Tyndarus' miserable daughter,
Though guiltless, hath unjustly been accused."
Daughter of Leda hail ! wert thou then here ?
While I as if thou to the starry paths
Hadst mounted, through my ignorance proclaimed
Thou from this world on rapid wings wert borne.
But I no longer will allow thee thus
To sport with the afflictions of thy friends ;
For in thy cause thy lord and his brave troops
On Ilion's coast already have endured
Abundant toils.

MEN. These are the very words
She uttered ; and by what ye both aver
The truth is ascertained. O happy day
Which gives thee to my arms !

HEL. My dearest lord,
O Menelaus, it is long indeed
Since I have seen you : but joy comes at last.
My friends, transported I receive my lord
Whom I once more with these fond arms enfold,
After the radiant chariot of the sun
Hath oft the world illumined.

MEN. I embrace
Thee too : but having now so much to say
I know not with what subject to begin.

HEL. Joy raises my exulting crest, these tears
Are tears of ecstasy, around your neck
My arms I fling with transport, O my husband,
O sight most wished for !

MEN. I acquit the Fates,
Since Jove's and Leda's daughter I possess,
On whom her brothers borne on milk-white steeds

Erst showered abundant blessings, when the torch
 Was kindled at our jocund nuptial rite ;
 Though from my palace her the gods conveyed.
 But evil now converted into good
 To me thy husband hath at length restored
 My long-lost consort : grant, O bounteous Heaven,
 That I these gifts of fortune may enjoy.

HEL. May you enjoy them, for my vows concur
 With yours ; nor, of us two, can one be wretched
 Without the other. O my friends, I groan
 No longer, I no longer shed the tear
 For my past woes : my husband I possess
 Whom I from Troy expected to return
 Full many, many years.

MEN. I still am thine,
 And thee with these fond arms again enfold.
 But oft the chariot of the sun revolved
 Through his diurnal orbit, ere the frauds
 Of Juno I discerned. Yet more from joy
 Than from affliction rise the tears I shed.

HEL. What shall I say ? what mortal could presume
 E'er to have hoped for such a blest event ?
 An unexpected visitant once more
 I clasp you to my bosom.

MEN. And I thee
 Who didst appear to sail for Ida's town,
 And Ilion's wretched turrets. By the gods,
 Inform me, I conjure thee, by what means
 Thou from my palace hither wert conveyed.

HEL. Alas ! you to the source of all my woes
 Ascend, and search into most bitter tidings.

MEN. Speak : for whate'er hath been ordained by Heaven
 Ought to be published.

HEL. I abhor the topic
 On which I now am entering.

MEN. Yet relate
 All that thou know'st ; for pleasing 'tis to hear
 Of labours that are past.

HEL. I never went
 To that barbarian youth's adulterous couch
 By the swift oar impelled : but winged love
 Those hapless spousals formed.

MEN. What god, what fate
 Hath torn thee from thy country ?

HEL. O my lord,
 The son of Jove hath placed me on the banks
 Of Nile.

MEN. With what amazement do I hear
 This wondrous tale of thy celestial guide !

HEL. Oft have I wept, and still the tear bedews
These eyes : to Juno, wife of Jove, I owe
My ruin.

MEN. Wherefore wished she to have heaped
Mischiefs on thee ?

HEL. Ye sources of whate'er
To me hath been most dreadful, O ye baths
And fountains, where those goddesses adorned
Their rival beauties, from whose influence rose
That judgment !

MEN. Were those curses on thy head
By Juno showered, that judgment to requite ?

HEL. To rescue me from Venus.

MEN. What thou mean'st
Inform me.

HEL. Who to Paris had engaged——

MEN. O wretched woman !

HEL. Wretched, wretched me !
Thus did she waft me to th' Egyptian coast.

MEN. Then in thy stead to him that image gave,
As thou inform'st me.

HEL. But alas ! what woes
Thence visited our wretched house ! ah mother !
Ah me !

MEN. What sayst thou ?

HEL. Leda is no more.
Around her neck she fixed the deadly noose
On my account, through my unhappy nuptials
O'erwhelmed with foul disgrace.

MEN. Alas ! But lives
Hermione our daughter ?

HEL. Yet unwedded,
Yet childless, O my husband, she bewails
My miserable 'spousals, my disgrace.

MEN. O Paris, who hast utterly o'erthrown
All my devoted house, these curst events,
Both thee, and myriads of the Grecian troops
With brazen arms refulgent, have destroyed.

HEL. But from my country in an evil hour,
From my loved native city, and from you,
Me hath the goddess driven, a wretch accursed
In that I left our home, and bridal bed,
Which yet I left not, for those base espousals.

CHOR. If ye hereafter meet with happier fortune,
This may atone for all ye have endured
Already.

MES. To me too, O Menelaus,
Communicate a portion of that joy
Which I perceive, but know not whence it springs.

MEN. Thou too, old man, shalt in our conference share.

MES. Was not she then the cause of all the woes
Endured at Troy?

MEN. Not she: we were deceived
By those immortal Powers, whose plastic hand
Moulded a cloud into that baleful image.

MES. What words are these you utter? have we toiled
In vain, and only for an empty cloud?

MEN. These deeds were wrought by Juno, and the strife
'Twixt the three goddesses.

MES. But is this woman
Indeed your wife?

MEN. E'en she: and thou for this
On my assertion safely mayst depend.

MES. My daughter, O how variable is Jove,
And how inscrutable! for he with ease
Whirls us around, now here, now there; one suffers
Full many toils; another, who ne'er knew
What sorrow was, is swallowed up at once
In swift perdition, nor in Fortune's gifts
A firm and lasting tenure doth enjoy.
Thou and thy husband have endured a war,
Of slander thou, but he of pointed spears:
For by the tedious labours he endured
He nothing could obtain, but now obtains
The greatest and the happiest of all boons,
Which comes to him unsought. Thou hast not shamed
Thy aged father, and the sons of Jove,
Nor acted as malignant rumour speaks.
I now renew thy hymeneal rite,
And still am mindful of the torch I bore,
Running before the steeds, when in a car
Thou with this favoured bridegroom wert conveyed
From thy paternal mansion's happy gates.
For worthless is that servant who neglects
His master's interests, nor partakes their joys,
Nor feels for their afflictions. I was born
Indeed a slave, yet I with generous slaves
Would still be numbered, for although the name
I bear is abject, yet my soul is free.
Far better this, than if I had at once
Suffered two evils, a corrupted heart,
And vile subjection to another's will.

MEN. Courage, old man: for thou hast borne my
shield,
And in my cause endured unnumbered toils,
Sharing my dangers: now partake my joys;
Go tell the friends I left, what thou hast seen,
And our auspicious fortunes: on the shore

Bid them remain, till our expected conflict
Is finished ; and observe how we may sail
From this loathed coast ; that, with our better fortune
Conspiring, we, if possible, may 'scape
From these barbarians.

MES. Your commands, O king,
Shall be obeyed. But I perceive how vain
And how replete with falsehood is the voice
Of prophets : no dependence can be placed
Upon the flames that from the altar rise,
Or on the voices of the feathered choir.
It is the height of folly to suppose
That birds are able to instruct mankind.
For Calchas, to the host, nor by his words
Nor signs, declared, "I for a cloud behold
My friends in battle slain." The seer was mute,
And Troy in vain was taken. But perhaps
You will rejoin, "'Twas not the will of Heaven
That he should speak." Why then do we consult
These prophets ? We by sacrifice should ask
For blessings from the gods, and lay aside
All auguries. This vain delusive bait
Was but invented to beguile mankind.
No sluggard e'er grew rich by divination,
The best of seers are Prudence and Discernment.

[Exit MESSENGER.]

CHOR. My sentiments on prophets well accord
With those of this old man. He whom the gods
Th' immortal gods befriend, in his own house
Hath a response that never can mislead.

HEL. So be it. All thus far is well. But how
You came with safety, O unhappy man,
From Troy, 'twill nought avail for me to know ;
Yet with the sorrows of their friends, have friends
A wish to be acquainted.

MEN. Thou hast asked
A multitude of questions in one short
And blended sentence. Why should I recount
To thee our sufferings on the Ægean deep,
Those treacherous beacons, by the vengeful hand
Of Nauplius kindled on Eubœa's rocks,
The towns of Crete, or in the Libyan realm,
Which I have visited, and the famed heights
Of Perseus ? never could my words assuage
Thy curiosity, and, by repeating
My woes to thee, I should but grieve the more,
And yet a second time those sufferings feel.

HEL. You in your answer have been more discreet
Than I who such a question did propose.

But pass o'er all beside, and only tell me
How long you wandered o'er the briny main.

MEN. Year after year, besides the ten at Troy,
Seven tedious revolutions of the sun.

HEL. The time you speak of, O unhappy man,
Is long indeed : but from those dangers saved
You hither come to bleed.

MEN. What words are these?
What dost thou mean? O, how hast thou undone me !
HEL. Fly from these regions with your utmost speed :
Or he to whom this house belongs will slay you.

MEN. What have I done that merits such a fate?
HEL. You hither come an unexpected guest,
And are a hindrance to my bridal rite.

MEN. Is there a man then who presumes to wed
My consort?

HEL. And with arrogance to treat me,
Which I, alas ! have hitherto endured.

MEN. Of private rank, in his own strength alone
Doth he confide, or rules he o'er the land?

HEL. Lord of this region, royal Proteus' son.

MEN. This is the very riddle which I heard
From yonder female servant.

HEL. At which gate
Of this barbarian palace did you stand?

MEN. Here, whence I like a beggar was repelled.

HEL. What, did you beg for food ! ah wretched me !

MEN. The fact was thus : though I that abject name
Assumed not.

HEL. You then know, it seems, the whole
About my nuptials.

MEN. This I know : but whether
Thou has escaped th' embraces of the king
I still am uninformed.

HEL. That I have kept
Your bed still spotless, may you rest assured.

MEN. How canst thou prove the fact? if thou speak
truth

To me, it will give pleasure.

HEL. Do you see,
Close to the tomb, my miserable seat?

MEN. I on the ground behold a couch : but what
Hast thou to do with that, O wretched woman?

HEL. Here I a suppliant bowed, that I might 'scape
From those espousals.

MEN. Couldst thou find no altar,
Or dost thou follow the barbarian mode?

HEL. Equally with the temples of the gods
Will this protect me.

MEN. Is not then my bark
Allowed to waft thee to the Spartan shore?

HEL. Rather the sword than Helen's bridal bed
Awaits you.

MEN. Thus should I of all mankind
Be the most wretched.

HEL. Let not shame prevent
Your 'scaping from this land.

MEN. And leaving thee,
For whom I laid the walls of Ilion waste?

HEL. 'Twere better than to perish in the cause
Of me your consort.

MEN. Such unmanly deeds
As these thou speak'st of would disgrace the chief
Who conquered Troy.

HEL. You cannot slay the king,
Which is perhaps the project you have formed.

MEN. Hath he then such a body as no steel
Can penetrate?

HEL. My reasons you shall know. !
But it becomes not a wise man t' attempt
What cannot be performed.

MEN. Shall I submit
My hands in silence to the galling chain?

HEL. You know not how to act in these dire straits
To which we are reduced : but of some plot
Must we avail ourselves.

MEN. 'Twere best to die
In some brave action than without a conflict.

HEL. One only hope of safety yet remains.

MEN. By gold can it be purchased, or depends it
On dauntless courage, or persuasive words?

HEL. Of your arrival if the monarch hear not.

MEN. Who can inform him? he will never sure
Know who I am.

HEL. He hath a sure associate,
Within his palace, equal to the gods.

MEN. Some voice which from its inmost chambers
sounds?

HEL. No : 'tis his sister, her they call Theonoe

MEN. She bears indeed a most prophetic name;
But say, what mighty deeds can she perform?

HEL. All things she knows, and will inform her brother
That you are here.

MEN. We both, alas ! must die,
Nor can I possibly conceal myself.

HEL. Could our united supplications move her?

MEN. To do what action? Into what vain hope
Wouldst thou mislead me?

HEL. Not to tell her brother
That you are in the land.

MEN. If we prevail
Thus far, can we escape from these domains ?

HEL. With ease, if she concur in our design,
But not without her knowledge.

MEN. This depends
On thee : for woman best prevails with woman.
HEL. Around her knees these suppliant hands I'll twine.

MEN. Go then ; but what if she reject our prayer ?

HEL. You certainly must die ; and I by force
Shall to the king be wedded.

MEN. Thou betray'st me ;
That force thou talk'st of is but mere pretence.

HEL. But by your head that sacred oath I swear.

MEN. What sayst thou, wilt thou die, and never change
Thy husband ?

HEL. By the self-same sword : my corse
Shall lie beside you.

MEN. To confirm the words
Which thou hast spoken, take my hand.

HEL. I take
Your hand, and swear that after you are dead
I will not live.

MEN. And I will put an end
To my existence, if deprived of thee.

HEL. But how shall we die so as to procure
Immortal glory ?

MEN. Soon as on the tomb
Thee I have slain, myself will I destroy.
But first a mighty conflict shall decide
Our claims who to thy bridal bed aspire.
Let him who dares, draw near : for the renown
I won at Troy, I never will belie,
Nor yet returning to the Grecian shore
Suffer unnumbered taunts for having reft
Thetis of her Achilles, and beheld
Ajax the Telamonian hero slain,
With Neleus' grandson, though I dare not bleed
To save my consort. Yet on thy behalf
Without regret, will I surrender up
This fleeting life : for if the gods are wise
They lightly scatter dust upon the tomb
Of the brave man who by his foes is slain,
But pile whole mountains on the coward's breast.

CHOR. O may the race of Tantalus, ye gods,
At length be prosperous, may their sorrows cease !

HEL. Wretch that I am ! for such is my hard fate :
O Menelaus, we are lost for ever.

The prophetess Theonoe, from the palace
 Comes forth : I hear the sounding gates unbarred.
 Fly from this spot. But whither can you fly?
 For your arrival here, full well she knows,
 Absent, or present. How, O wretched me,
 Am I undone ! in safety you return
 From Troy, from a barbarian land, to rush
 Again upon the swords of fresh barbarians.

THEONOE, MENELAUS, HELEN, CHORUS.

THEON. [*to one of her Attendants.*]
 Lead thou the way, sustaining in thy hand
 The kindled torch, and fan the ambient air,
 Observing every due and solemn rite,
 That we may breathe the purest gales of Heaven.
 Meanwhile do thou, if any impious foot
 Have marked the path, with lustral flames efface
 The taint, and wave the pitchy brand around,
 That I may pass; and when we have performed
 Our duteous homage to th' immortal powers,
 Into the palace let the flame be borne,
 Restore it to the Lares. What opinion
 Have you, O Helen, of th' events foretold
 By my prophetic voice? Your husband comes,
 Your Menelaus in this land appears,
 Reft of his ships, and of your image reft.
 'Scaped from what dangers, O unhappy man,
 Art thou arrived, although thou know'st not yet
 Whether thou e'er shalt to thy home return,
 Or here remain. For there is strife in Heaven ;
 And Jove on thy account this day will hold
 A council ; Juno who was erst thy foe,
 Now grown benignant, with thy consort safe
 To Sparta would convey thee, that all Greece
 May understand that the fictitious nuptials
 Of Paris, were the baleful gift of Venus.
 But Venus wants to frustrate thy return,
 Lest she should be convicted, or appear
 At least the palm of beauty to have purchased
 By vending Helen for a wife to Paris.
 But this important question to decide,
 On me depends ; I either can destroy thee,
 Which is the wish of Venus, by informing
 My brother thou art here ; or save thy life
 By taking Juno's side, and thy arrival
 Concealing from my brother, who enjoined me
 To inform him whensoever thou on these shores
 Shouldst land. Who bears the tidings to my brother,

When they are told, and see, how to the arts
 Of these contending goddesses they owe
 Their ruin ; but that I have to my friends
 Been ever true, they to the rank I held
 'Midst chaste and virtuous matrons, will restore me :
 My daughter too, whom no man dares to wed,
 From me her bridal portion shall receive ;
 And I, no longer doomed to lead the life
 Of an unhappy vagrant, shall enjoy
 The treasures that our palaces contain.
 Had Menelaus died, and been consumed
 In the funereal pyre, I should have wept
 For him far distant in a foreign realm ;
 But now shall I for ever be bereft
 Of him who lives, and seem to have escaped
 From every danger. Virgin, act not thus ;
 To thee I kneel a suppliant ; O confer
 On me this boon, and emulate the justice
 Of your great sire. For fair renown attends
 The children, from a virtuous father sprung,
 Who equal their hereditary worth.

THEON. Most piteous are the words which you have
 spoken ;

You also claim my pity : but I wish
 To hear what Menelaus yet can plead
 To save his life.

MEN. I cannot at your knees
 Fall prostrate, or with tears these eyelids stain :
 For I should cover all the great exploits
 Which I achieved at Ilion with disgrace,
 If I became a dastard ; though some hold
 'Tis not unworthy of the brave to weep
 When wretched. But this honourable part
 (If such a part can e'er be honourable)
 I will not act, because the prosperous fortunes
 Which erst were mine, are present to my soul.
 If then you haply are disposed to save
 A foreigner who justly claims his wife,
 Restore her, and protect us : if you spurn
 Our suit, I am not now for the first time,
 But have been often wretched, and your name
 Shall be recorded as an impious woman.
 These thoughts, which I hold worthy of myself,
 And just, and such as greatly must affect
 Your inmost heart, I at your father's tomb
 With energy will utter. Good old man,
 Beneath this marble sepulchre who dwell'st,
 To thee I sue, restore my wife, whom Jove
 Sent hither to thy realm, that thou for me

Might'st guard her. Thou, I know, since thou art dead,
 Canst ne'er have power to give her back again :
 But she, this holy priestess, will not suffer
 Reproach to fall on her illustrious sire,
 Whom I invoke amid the shades beneath :
 For this depends on her. Thee too I call,
 O Pluto, to my aid, who hast received
 Full many a corse, which fell in Helen's cause
 Beneath my sword, and still retain'st the prize :
 Either restore them now to life, or force
 Her who seems mightier than her pious father,
 To give me back my wife. But of my consort
 If ye resolve to rob me, I will urge
 Those arguments which Helen hath omitted.
 Know then, O virgin, first I by an oath
 Have bound myself, your brother to encounter,
 And he, or I, must perish ; the plain truth
 Is this. But foot to foot in equal combat,
 If he refuse to meet me, and attempt
 To drive us suppliants from the tomb by famine,
 My consort will I slay, and with the sword
 Here on this sepulchre my bosom pierce,
 That the warm current of our blood may stream
 Into the grave. Thus shall our corpses lie
 Close to each other on this polished marble :
 To you eternal sorrow shall they cause,
 And foul reproach to your great father's name.
 For neither shall your brother wed my Helen,
 Nor any man beside : for I with me
 Will bear her ; if I cannot bear her home,
 Yet will I bear her to the shades beneath.
 But why complain ? If I shed tears, and act
 The woman's part, I rather shall become
 An object of compassion, than deserve
 To be esteemed a warrior. If you list,
 Slay me, for I can never fall inglorious.
 But rather yield due credence to my words,
 So will you act with justice, and my wife
 Shall I recover.

CHOR. To decide the cause
 On which we speak, belongs to thee, O virgin :
 But so decide as to please all.

THEON. By nature
 And inclination am I formed to act
 With piety, myself too I revere :
 Nor will I e'er pollute my sire's renown,
 Or gratify my brother by such means
 As might make me seem base. For from my birth,
 Hath justice in this bosom fixed her shrine :

And since from Nereus I inherited
 This temper, Menelaus will I strive
 To save. But now since Juno is disposed
 To be your friend, with her will I accord :
 May Venus be propitious, though her rites
 I never have partaken, and will strive
 For ever to remain a spotless maid.
 But I concur with thee, O Menelaus,
 In all thou to my father at his tomb
 Hast said : for with injustice should I act
 If I restored not Helen : had he lived,
 My sire on thee again would have bestowed
 Thy consort, and her former lord on Helen.
 For vengeance, in the shades of Hell beneath,
 And among all that breathe the vital air,
 Attends on those who break their plighted trust.
 The soul of the deceased, although it live
 Indeed no longer, yet doth still retain
 A consciousness which lasts for ever, lodged
 In the eternal scene of its abode,
 The liquid ether. To express myself
 Concisely, all that you requested me
 Will I conceal, nor with my counsels aid
 My brother's folly ; I to him shall show
 A real friendship, though without the semblance,
 If I his vicious manners can reform
 And make him more religious. Therefore find
 Means to escape yourselves ; for I will hence
 Depart in silence. First implore the gods ;
 To Venus sue, that she your safe return
 Would suffer ; and to Juno, not to change
 The scheme which she hath formed, both to preserve
 Your lord and you. O my departed sire,
 For thee will I exert my utmost might,
 That on thy honoured name no foul reproach
 May ever rest.

[Exit THEONOE.]

CHOR. No impious man e'er prospered :
 But fairest hopes attend an honest cause.

HEL. O Menelaus, as to what depends
 Upon the royal maid, are we secure :
 But next doth it become you to propose
 Some means our safety to effect.

MEN. Now listen
 To me ; thou in this palace long hast dwelt,
 An inmate with the servants of the king.

HEL. Why speak you thus ? for you raise hopes, as
 though

You could do somewhat for our common good.

MEN. Canst thou prevail on any one of those

Who guide the harnessed steeds, to furnish us
With a swift car ?

HEL. Perhaps I might succeed
In that attempt. But how shall we escape
Who to these fields and this barbarian land
Are strangers ? An impracticable thing
Is this you speak of.

MEN. Well, but in the palace
Concealed, if with this sword the king I slay.

HEL. His sister will not suffer this in silence
If you attempt aught 'gainst her brother's life.

MEN. We have no ship in which we can escape ;
For that which we brought hither, by the waves
Is swallowed up.

HEL. Now hear what I propose ;
From woman's lips if wisdom ever flow.
Will you permit a rumour of your death
To be dispersed ?

MEN. This were an evil omen :
But I, if any benefit arise
From such report, consent to be called dead
While I yet live.

HEL. That impious tyrant's pity
Our female choir shall move, with tresses shorn,
And chaunt funeral strains.

MEN. What tendency
Can such a project have to our deliverance ?

HEL. I will allege that 'tis an ancient custom ;
And of the monarch his permission crave,
That I on you, as if you in the sea
Had perished, may bestow a vacant tomb.

MEN. If he consent, how can this feigned interment
Enable us to fly without a ship ?

HEL. I will command a bark to be prepared,
From whence into the bosom of the deep
Funeral trappings I may cast.

MEN. How well
And wisely hast thou spoken ! but the tomb
If he direct thee on the strand to raise,
Nought can this scheme avail.

HEL. But I will say
'Tis not the usage, in a Grecian realm,
With earth to cover the remains of those
Who perished in the waves.

MEN. Thou hast again
Removed this obstacle : I then with thee
Will sail, and the funeral trappings place
In the same vessel.

HEL. 'Tis of great importance

That you, and all those mariners who 'scaped
The shipwreck, should be present.

MEN. If we find
A bark at anchor, with our falcions armed
In one collected band will we assail
And board it.

HEL. To direct all this, belongs
To you; but may the prosperous breezes fill
Our sails, and guide us o'er the billowy deep.

MEN. These vows shall be accomplished; for the gods
At length will cause my toils to cease: but whence
Wilt thou pretend thou heard'st that I was dead?

HEL. Yourself shall be the messenger; relate
How you alone escaped his piteous doom,
A partner of the voyage with the son
Of Atreus, and the witness of his death.

MEN. This tattered vest will testify my shipwreck.

HEL. How seasonable was that which seemed at first
To be a grievous loss! but the misfortune
May end perhaps in bliss.

MEN. Must I with thee
Enter the palace, or before this tomb
Sit motionless?

HEL. Here stay: for if the king
By force should strive to tear you hence, this tomb
And your drawn sword will save you. But I'll go
To my apartment, shear my flowing hair,
For sable weeds this snowy vest exchange,
And rend with bloody nails these livid cheeks:
For 'tis a mighty conflict, and I see
These two alternatives: if in my plots
Detected, I must die; or to my country
I shall return, and save your life. O Juno,
Thou sacred queen, who shar'st the couch of Jove,
Relieve two wretches from their toils; to thee
Our suppliant arms uplifting high t'wards Heaven
With glittering stars adorned, thy blest abode,
We sue: and thou, O Venus, who didst gain
The palm of beauty through my promised 'spousals,
Spare me, thou daughter of Dione, spare;
For thou enough hast injured me already;
Exposing not my person, but my name,
To those barbarians; suffer me to die,
If thou wilt slay me, in my native land.
Why art thou still insatiably malignant?
Why dost thou harass me by love, by fraud,
By the invention of these new deceits,
And by thy magic philtres plunge in blood
Our miserable house? If thou hadst ruled

With mildness, thou to man hadst been most grateful
 Of all the gods. I speak not this at random.
 [HELEN and MENELAUS retire behind the tomb,

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

On thee who build'st thy tuneful seat
 Protected by the leafy groves, I call,
 O nightingale, thy accents ever sweet
 Their murmuring melancholy fall
 Prolong ! O come, and with thy plaintive strain
 Aid me to utter my distress,
 Thy woes, O Helen, let the song express,
 And those of Troy now levelled with the plain
 By Grecian might. From hospitable shores,
 Relying on barbaric oars,
 The spoiler Paris fled,
 And o'er the deep to Priam's realm with pride
 Bore his imaginary bride,
 Fancying that thou hadst graced his bed,
 To nuptials fraught with shame by wanton Venus led.

I. 2.

Unnumbered Greeks, transpierced with spears,
 Or crushed beneath the falling ramparts, bled :
 Hence with her tresses shorn, immersed in tears
 The matron wails her lonely bed,
 But Nauplius, kindling near th' Eubœan deep
 Those torches, o'er our host prevailed ;
 Though with a single bark the traitor sailed,
 He wrecked whole fleets against Caphareus' steep,
 And the Ægean coasts, the beacon seemed
 A star, and through Heaven's conclave gleamed,
 Placed on the craggy height.
 While flushed with conquest, from the Phrygian strand
 They hastened to their native land,
 Portentous source of bloody fight,
 The cloud by Juno formed, beguiled their dazzled sight.

II. I.

Whether the image was divine.
 Drew from terrestrial particles its birth,
 Or from the middle region, how define
 By curious search, ye sons of earth ?

Far from unravelling Heaven's abstruse intents,
 We view the world tost to and fro,
 Mark strange vicissitudes of joy and woe,
 Discordant and miraculous events.
 Thou, Helen, art indeed the child of Jove.
 The swan, thy sire, inflamed by love,
 To Leda's bosom flew :
 Yet with imputed crimes malignant fame
 Through Greece arraigns thy slandered name.
 Of men I know not whom to trust,
 But what the gods pronounce have I found ever just.

II. 2.

Frantic are ye who seek renown
 Amid the horrors of th' embattled field,
 Who masking guilt beneath a laurel crown
 With nervous arm the falchion wield,
 Not slaughtered thousands can your fury sate.
 If still success the judgment guide,
 If bloody battle right and wrong decide,
 Incessant strife must vex each rival state :
 Hence from her home departs each Phrygian wife,
 O Helen, when the cruel strife
 Which from thy charms arose,
 One conference might have closed : now myriads dwell
 With Pluto in the shades of Hell,
 And flames, as when Jove's vengeance throws
 The bolt, have caught her towers and finished Ilion's woes.

THEOCLYMENUS, CHORUS (*HELEN and MENELAUS
 behind the tomb*).

THEOC. Hail, O thou tomb of my illustrious sire !
 For thee have I interred before my gate,
 That with thy shade I might hold frequent conference,
 O Proteus ; Theoclymenus thy son
 Thee, O my father, oft as he goes forth,
 Oft as he enters these abodes, accosts.
 But to the palace now convey those hounds
 And nets, my servants. I full many a time
 Have blamed myself, because I never punished
 With death such miscreants ; now I am informed
 That publicly some Greek to these domains
 Is come unnoticed by my guards, a spy,
 Or one who means to carry Helen off
 By stealth : but if I seize him, he shall die.
 Methinks I find all over : for the daughter
 Of Tyndarus sits no longer at the tomb,
 But from these shores hath fled, and now is crossing

The billowy deep. Unbar the gates, bring forth
 My coursers from the stalls, and brazen cars;
 Lest through my want of vigilance the dame
 Whom I would make my consort, should escape me,
 Borne from this land. Yet stay; for I behold
 Those we pursue still here beneath this roof,
 Nor are they fled. Ho! why in sable vest
 Hast thou arrayed thyself, why cast aside
 Thy robes of white, and from thy graceful head
 With ruthless steel thy glowing ringlets shorn,
 And wherefore bathed thy cheek with recent tears?
 Groan'st thou, by visions of the night apprized
 Of some calamity, or hast thou heard
 Within, a rumour that afflicts thy soul?

HEL. My lord (for I already by that name
 Accost you), I am utterly undone,
 My former bliss is vanished, and I now
 Am nothing.

THEOC. Art thou plunged into distress
 So irretrievable? what cruel fate
 Hath overtaken thee?

HEL. My Menelaus,
 (Ah, how shall I express myself?) is dead.

THEOC. Although I must not triumph in th' event
 Thou speak'st of, yet to me 'tis most auspicious.
 How know'st thou? Did Theonoe tell thee this?

HEL. She and this mariner, who when he perished
 Was present, both concur in the same tale.

THEOC. Is there a man arrived, who for the truth
 Of that account can vouch?

HEL. He is arrived:
 And would to Heaven that such auspicious fortune
 As I could wish attended him.

THEOC. Who is he?
 Where is he? I would know the real fact.

HEL. 'Tis he who stupefied with sorrow sits
 Upon the tomb.

THEOC. In what unseemly garb
 Is he arrayed, O Phœbus!

HEL. In that dress,
 Ah me! methinks my husband I behold.

THEOC. But in what country was the stranger born,
 And whence did he come hither?

HEL. He's a Greek,
 One of those Greeks who with my husband sailed.

THEOC. How doth he say that Menelaus died?
 HEL. Most wretchedly, engulfed amid the waves.

THEOC. Where? as he passed o'er the barbarian
 seas?

HEL. Dashed on the rocks of Libya, which affords
No haven.

THEOC. But whence happened it, that he
This partner of his voyage did not perish?

HEL. The worthless are more prosperous than the brave.

THEOC. Where left he the wrecked fragments of his ship
When he came hither?

HEL. There, where would to Heaven
Perdition had o'ertaken him, and spared
The life of Menelaus.

THEOC. He, it seems,
Is then no more : but in what bark arrived
This messenger?

HEL. Some sailors, as he says,
By chance passed by, and snatched him from the waves.

THEOC. But where's that hateful pest which in thy stead
Was sent to Ilion?

HEL. Speak you of a cloud,
Resembling me? it mounted to the skies.

THEOC. O Priam, for how frivolous a cause
Thou with thy Troy didst perish!

HEL. In their woes
I too have been involved.

THEOC. But did he leave
Thy husband's corse unburied, or strew dust
O'er his remains?

HEL. He left them uninterred,
Ah, wretched me!

THEOC. And didst thou for this cause
Sever the ringlets of thy auburn hair?

HEL. Still is he dear, lodged in this faithful breast

THEOC. Hast thou sufficient reason then to weep
For this calamity?

HEL. Could you bear lightly
Your sister's death?

THEOC. No surely. But what means
Thy still residing at this marble tomb?

HEL. Why do you harass me with taunting words,
And why disturb the dead?

THEOC. Because, still constant
To thy first husband, from my love thou fliest.

HEL. But I will fly no longer : haste, begin
The nuptial rite.

THEOC. 'Twas long ere thou didst come
To this : but I such conduct must applaud.

HEL. Know you then how to act? let us forget
All that has passed.

THEOC. Upon what terms? with kindness
Should kindness be repaid.

HEL. Let us conclude
The peace, and O be reconciled.

THEOC. All strife
With thee I to the winds of heaven consign.
HEL. Now, since you are my friend, I by those knees
Conjure you.

THEOC. With what object in thy view,
To me an earnest suppliant dost thou bend?

HEL. I my departed husband would inter.

THEOC. What tomb can be bestowed upon the absent
Wouldst thou inter his shade?

HEL. There is a custom
Among the Greeks established, that the man
Who in the ocean perishes—

THEOC. What is it?
For in such matters Pelops' race are wise.

HEL. To bury in their stead an empty vest.

THEOC. Perform funeral rites, and heap the tomb
On any ground thou wilt.

HEL. We in this fashion
Bury not the drowned mariner.

THEOC. How then?
I am a stranger to the Grecian customs.
HEL. Each pious gift due to our breathless friends
We cast into the sea.

THEOC. On the deceased
What presents for thy sake can I bestow?

HEL. I know not: for in offices like these
Am I unpractised, having erst been happy.

THEOC. An acceptable message have you brought,
O stranger.

MEN. Most ungrateful to myself
And the deceased.

THEOC. What funeral rites on those
Ocean hath swallowed up, do ye bestow?

MEN. Such honours as each individual's wealth
Enables us to pay him.

THEOC. Name the cost,
And for her sake receive whate'er you will.

MEN. Blood is our first libation to the dead.

THEOC. What blood? inform me, for with your
instructions

I will comply.

MEN. Determine that thyself,
For whatsoever thou giv'st will be sufficient.

THEOC. The customary victims 'mong barbarians
Are either horse or bull.

MEN. Whate'er thou giv'st,
it be somewhat princely.

THEOC. My rich herds
With these are amply furnished.

MEN. And the bier
Without the corse is borne in solemn state.

THEOC. It shall : but what is there beside which custom
Requires to grace the funeral.

MEN. Brazen arms :
For war was what he loved.

THEOC. We will bestow
Such presents as are worthy of the race
Of mighty Pelops.

MEN. And those budding flowers
Th' exuberant soil produces.

THEOC. But say, how
And in what manner ye these offerings plunge
Into the ocean.

MEN. We must have a bark
And mariners to ply the oars.

THEOC. How far
Will they launch forth the vessel from the strand?

MEN. So far as from the shore thou scarce wilt see
The keel divide the waves.

THEOC. But why doth Greece
Observe this usage?

MEN. Lest the rising billows
Cast back to land th' ablutions.

THEOC. Ye shall have
A swift Phœnician vessel.

MEN. This were kind,
And no small favour shown to Menelaus.

THEOC. Without her presence, cannot you perform
These rites alone?

MEN. Such task or to a mother,
Or wife, or child, belongs.

THEOC. 'Tis then her duty,
You say, to bury her departed lord?

MEN. Sure, piety instructs us not to rob
The dead of their accustomed dues.

THEOC. Enough :
On me it is incumbent to promote

Such virtue in my consort. I will enter
The palace, and from thence for the deceased
Bring forth rich ornaments ; with empty hands
You from this region will not I send forth,
That you may execute what she desires.
But having brought me acceptable tidings,
Instead of these vile weeds shall you receive
A decent garb and food, that to your country
You may return : for clearly I perceive

That you are wretched now. But torture not
Thy bosom with unprofitable cares,
O hapless woman, for thy Menelaus
Is now no more, nor can the dead revive.

MEN. Thee it behoves, O blooming dame, to love
Thy present husband, and to lay aside
The fond remembrance of thy breathless lord ;
For such behaviour suits thy fortunes best.
But if to Greece with safety I return,
That infamy which erst pursued thy name
I'll cause to cease, if thou acquit thyself
Of these great duties like a virtuous consort.

HEL. I will ; nor shall my husband e'er have cause
To blame me : you too, who are here, shall witness
The truth of my assertions. But within
Go lave your wearied limbs, O wretched man,
And change your habit ; for without delay
To you will I become a benefactress.
Hence too with greater zeal will you perform
The rites my dearest Menelaus claims,
If all due honours you from me receive.

[*Exeunt* THEOCLYMENUS, HELEN, and MENELAUS.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

O'er mountains erst with hasty tread
Did the celestial mother stray,
Nor stop where branching thickets spread,
Where rapid torrents crossed her way,
Or on the margin of the billowy deep ;
Her daughter whom we dread to name
She wept, while hailing that majestic dame,
Cymbals of Bacchus from the craggy steep
Sent forth their clear and piercing sound,
Her car the harnessed dragons drew ;
Following the nymph torn from her virgin crew.
Amidst her maidens swift of foot were found
Diana skilled the bow to wield,
Minerva, who in glittering state
Brandished the spear and raised her Gorgon shield ;
But Jove looked down from Heaven t' award another fate.

I. 2.

Soon as the mother's toils were o'er,
When she had finished her career,
And sought the ravished maid no more,
To caves where drifted snows appear,

By Ida's nymphs frequented, did she pass,
 And threw herself in sorrow lost,
 On rocks and herbage crusted o'er with frost,
 Despoiled the wasted champaign of its grass,
 Rendered the peasant's tillage vain,
 Consuming a dispeopled land
 With meagre famine ; Spring at her command
 Denied the flocks that sickened on the plain
 The leafy tendrils of the vine ;
 Whole cities died, no victims bled,
 No frankincense perfumed Heaven's vacant shrine ;
 Nor burst the current from the Spring's obstructed head.

II. 1.

Then ceased the banquet, wont to charm
 Both gods above and men below :
 The mother's anger to disarm,
 And mitigate the stings of woe,
 Till in these words Jove uttered his behests :
 " Let each benignant grace attend
 Sweet music's sympathizing aid to lend,
 And drive corrosive grief from Ceres' breast
 Indignant for her ravished child :
 Now, O ye Muses, with the lyre
 Join the shrill hymns of your assembled choir,
 The brazen trumpet fill with accents wild,
 And beat the rattling drums amain."
 Then first of the immortal band,
 Venus with lovely smile approved the strain,
 And raised the deep-toned flute in her enchanting hand.

II. 2.

The laws reproved such foul desire,
 Yet 'gainst religion didst thou wed ;
 Thy uncle caught love's baleful fire,
 And rushed to thy incestuous bed.
 Thee shall the mighty mother's wrath confound,
 Because, through thee, before her shrine
 No victims slain appease the powers divine.
 Great virtue have hinds' hides, and ivy wound
 Upon a consecrated rod ;
 And youths, with virgins in a ring,
 When high from earth with matchless force they spring,
 Loose streams their hair, they celebrate that god
 The Bacchanalian votaries own,
 And waste in dance the sleepless night.
 But thou, confiding in thy charms alone,
 Forgett'st the moon that shines with more transcendent
 light.

HELEN, CHORUS.

HEL. Within the palace, O my friends, we prosper
 For Proteus' royal daughter, in our schemes
 Conspiring when her brother questioned her
 About my lord, no information gave
 Of his arrival : to my interests true
 She said, that cold in death he views no longer
 The radiant sun. But now my lord hath seized
 A vengeful falchion, in that mail designed
 To have been plunged beneath the deep arrayed,
 With nervous arm he lifts an orb'd shield,
 In his right hand protended gleams the spear,
 As if with me he was prepared to pay
 To the deceased due homage. Furnished thus
 With brazen arms, he's ready for the battle,
 And numberless barbarians will subdue
 Unaided, soon as we the ship ascend.
 Exchanging those unseemly weeds which clothe
 The shipwrecked mariner, in splendid robes
 Have I arrayed him, from transparent springs
 The laver filled, and bathed his wearied limbs
 But I must now be silent, for the man
 Who fancies I am ready to become
 His consort, leaves the palace. O my friends,
 In your attachment too I place my trust,
 Restrain your tongues, for we, when saved ourselves,
 If possible will save you from this thralldom.

THEOCLYMENUS, HELEN, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

THEOC. Go forth, in such procession as the stranger
 Directs you, O my servants, and convey
 These gifts funereal to the briny deep.
 But if thou dissapprove not what I say,
 Do thou, O Helen, yield to my persuasions,
 And here remain. For whether thou attend,
 Or art not present at the obsequies
 Of thy departed husband, thou to him
 Wilt show an equal reverence. Much I dread
 Lest hurried on by wild desire thou plunge
 Into the foaming billows, for the sake
 Of him on whom thou doat'st, thy former lord,
 Since thou his doom immoderately bewail'st
 Though he be lost, and never can return.

HEL. O my illustrious husband, I am bound
 To pay due honours to the man whom first
 I wedded, of our ancient nuptial joys
 A memory still retaining, for so well
 I loved my lord that I could even die

With him. But what advantage would result
 To the deceased, should I lay down my life?
 Yet let me go myself, and to his shade
 Perform each solemn rite. But may the gods,
 On you, and on the stranger who assists me
 In this my pious task, with liberal hand
 Confer the gifts I wish. But you in me
 Shall such a consort to your palace bear
 As you deserve, to recompense your kindness
 To me and Menelaus. Such events
 In some degree are measured by the will
 Of Fortune: but give orders for a ship
 To be prepared, these trappings to convey,
 So shall your purposed bounty be complete.

THEOC. [*to one of his Attendants.*]

Go thou, and furnish them a Tyrian bark
 Of fifty oars, with skilful sailors manned.

HEL. But may not he who decorates the tomb
 Govern the ship?

THEOC. My sailors must to him
 Yield an implicit deference.

HEL. This injunction
 Repeat, that they may clearly understand it.

THEOC. A second time, will I, and yet a third,
 Issue this self-same mandate, if to thee
 This can give pleasure.

HEL. May the gods confer
 Blessings on you, and prosper my designs!

THEOC. Waste not thy bloom with unavailing tears.

HEL. To you this day my gratitude will prove.

THEOC. All these attentions to the dead are nought
 But unavailing toil.

HEL. My pious care
 Not to those only whom the silent grave
 Contains, but to the living too extends.

THEOC. In me thou mayst expect to find a husband
 Who yields not to the Spartan Menelaus.

HEL. I censure not your conduct, but bewail
 My own harsh destiny.

THEOC. Bestow thy love
 On me, and prosperous fortunes shall return.

HEL. It is a lesson I have practised long,
 To love my friends.

THEOC. Shall I my navy launch,
 To join in these funereal rites?

HEL. Dread lord,
 Pay not unseemly homage to your vassals.

THEOC. Well! I each sacred usage will allow
 Practised by Pelops' race, for my abodes

Are undefiled with blood : thy Menelaus
 In Ægypt died not. But let some one haste
 And bid the nobles bear into my house
 The bridal gifts : for the whole earth is bound
 To celebrate in one consenting hymn
 My blest espousals with the lovely Helen.
 But go, embark upon the briny main,
 O stranger, and as soon as ye have paid
 All decent homage to her former lord
 Bring back my consort hither : that with me
 When you have feasted at our nuptial rite
 You to your native mansion may return,
 Or here continue in a happy state. [*Exit THEOCLYMENUS.*]

MEN. O Jove, thou mighty father, who art called
 A god supreme in wisdom, from thy heaven
 Look down, and save us from our woes : delay not
 To aid us : for we drag the galling yoke
 Of sorrow and mischance : if with thy finger
 Thou do but touch us, we shall soon attain
 The fortune which we wish for, since the toils
 We have endured already are sufficient.
 Ye gods, I now invoke you, from my mouth
 So shall ye hear full many joyful accents
 Mixed with these bitter plaints : for I deserve not
 To be for ever wretched ; but to tread
 At length secure. O grant me this one favour,
 And make my future life completely blest.
 [*Exeunt MENELAUS and HELEN.*]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

Swift bark of Sidon, by whose dashing oars
 Divided oft, the frothy billows rise,
 Propitious be thy voyage from these shores :
 In thy train the dolphins play,
 O'er the deep thou lead'st the way,
 While motionless its placid surface lies.
 Soon as Serenity the fair,
 That azure daughter of the main,
 Shall in this animating strain
 Have spoken : "To the gentle breeze of air
 Expand each undulating sail,
 Row briskly on before the gale,
 Ye mariners, in Perseus' ancient seat
 Till Helen rest her wearied feet."

I. 2.

Those sacred nymphs shall welcome thy return
 Who guard the portals of Minerva's fane
 Or speed the current from its murmuring urn :
 Choral dances of delight
 That prolong the jocund night,
 At Hyacinthus' banquet shalt thou join,
 Fair stripling, whom with luckless hand
 Unwitting did Apollo slay
 At games that crowned the festive day,
 Hurling his quoit on the Laconian strand ;
 To him Jove's son due honours paid :
 At Sparta too, that lovely maid
 Shalt thou behold, whom there thou left'st behind,
 Still to celibacy consigned.

II. I.

O might we cleave the air, like Libyan cranes,
 Who fly in ranks th' impending wintry storm ;
 When their shrill leader bids them quit the plains,
 They the veteran's voice obey,
 O'er rich harvests wing their way,
 Or where parched wastes th' unfruitful scene deform.
 With lengthened neck, ye feathered race
 Who skim the clouds in social band,
 Where the seven Pleiades expand
 Their radiance, and Orion heaves his mace,
 This joyous embassy convey
 As near Eurotas' banks ye stray ;
 That Menelaus to his subject land
 Victorious comes from Phrygia's strand.

II. 2.

Borne in your chariot down th' ethereal height,
 At length, ye sons of Tyndarus, appear,
 While vibrates o'er your heads the starry light :
 Habitants of heaven above,
 Now exert fraternal love,
 If ever Helen to your souls was dear,
 A calm o'er th' azure ocean spread,
 Bridle the tempests of the main,
 Propitious gales from Jove obtain,
 Your sister snatch from the barbarian's bed :
 Commenced on Ida's hill, that strife,
 Embittered with reproach her life,
 Although she never viewed proud Ilion's tower
 Reared by Apollo's matchless power.

MES. O king, I have discovered in the palace,
Events most inauspicious : what fresh woes
Is it my doleful office to relate !

MES. Seek another wife,
or Helen hath departed from this realm.

MES. Her o'er the briny main
From Ægypt's shores, hath Menelaus wafted,
Who came in person with a feigned account
Of his own death.

MES. The same
you to that stranger gave, and in one word
to tell you all, he carries off your sailors.

MES. When from the royal mansion

Jove's daughter to the shore was borne, she trod
With delicate and artful step, pretending
To wail her husband's loss, though he was present,
And yet alive. But when we reached the haven,
Sidonia's largest vessel we hauled forth,
Furnished with benches, and with fifty oars;
But a fresh series of incessant toil
Followed this toil; for while one fixed the mast,
Another ranged the oars, and with his hand
The signal gave, the sails were bound together,
Then was the rudder fastened to the stern
With thongs, cast forth: while they observed us busied
In such laborious task, the Grecian comrades
Of Menelaus to the shore advanced,
Clad in their shipwrecked vestments. Though their form
Was graceful, yet their visages were squalid:
But Atreus' son, beholding their approach,
Under the semblance of a grief that masked
His treacherous purpose, in these words addressed them:
"How, O ye wretched sailors, from what bark
Of Greece that hath been wrecked upon this coast
Are ye come hither? will ye join with us
In the funeral rites of Menelaus,

Whom Tyndarus's daughter, to an empty tomb
Consigns, though absent?" Simulated tears
They shed, and went aboard the ship, conveying
The presents to be cast into the sea
For Menelaus. But to us these things
Appeared suspicious, and we made remarks
Among ourselves upon the numerous band
Of our intruding passengers; but checked
Our tongues from speaking openly, through deference
To your commands. For when you to that stranger
Trusted the guidance of the ship, you caused
This dire confusion. All beside, with ease
Had we now lodged aboard, but could not force
The sturdy bull t' advance; he bellowing rolled
His eyes around, bending his back and low'ring
Betwixt his horns, nor dared we to approach
And handle him. But Helen's husband cried:
"O ye who laid Troy waste, will ye forget
To act like Greeks? why scruple ye to seize
And on your youthful shoulders heave the beast
Up to the rising prow, a welcome victim
To the deceased?" His falchion, as he spoke,
The warrior drew. His summons they obeyed,
Seized the stout bull, and carried him aboard:
But Menelaus stroked the horse's neck
And face, and with this gentle usage led him
Into the bark. At length when all its freight
The vessel had received, with graceful foot
Helen, the steps ascending, took her seat
On the mid deck; and Menelaus near her,
E'en he who they pretended was no more.
But some on the right side, and on the left
Others in equal numbers, man to man
Opposed, their station took, their swords concealing
Beneath their garments. We distinctly heard
The clamorous sailors animate each other
To undertake the voyage. But from land
When a convenient distance we had steered,
The pilot asked this question: "Shall we sail,
O stranger, any farther from the coast,
Or is this right? for 'tis my task to guide
The vessel." He replied: "Enough for me."
Then seized with his right hand the falchion, leaped
Upon the prow, and standing o'er the bull
The victim (without mentioning the name
Of any chief deceased; but as he drove
The weapon through his neck) thus prayed: "O Neptune,
Who in the ocean dwell'st, and ye chaste daughters
Of Nereus, to the Nauplian shore convey

Me and my consort, from this hostile land,
 In safety." But a crimson tide of blood,
 Auspicious to the stranger, stained the waves ;
 And some exclaimed : " There's treachery in this voyage,
 Let us sail homewards, issue thy commands,
 And turn the rudder." But the son of Atreus,
 Who had just slain the bull, to his companions
 Called loudly : " Why delay, O ye the flower
 Of Greece, to smite, to slaughter those barbarians,
 And cast them from the ship into the waves ?"
 But to your sailors our commander spoke
 A different language : " Will not some of you
 Tear up a plank, or with a shattered bench,
 Or ponderous oar, upon the bleeding heads
 Of those audacious foreigners our foes,
 Impress the ghastly wound ?" But on their feet
 All now stood up ; our hands with nautic poles
 Were armed, and theirs with swords : a tide of slaughter
 Ran down the ship. But Helen from the poop
 The Greeks encouraged ; " Where is the renown
 Ye gained at Troy ? display 'gainst these barbarians
 The same undaunted prowess." In their haste
 Full many fell, some rose again, the rest
 Might you have seen stretched motionless in death.
 But Menelaus, sheathed in glittering mail,
 Wherever his confederates he descried
 Hard pressed, rushed thither with his lifted sword,
 Driving us headlong from the lofty deck
 Into the waves, and forced your mariners
 To quit their oars. But the victorious king
 Now seized the rudder, and to Greece declared
 He would convey the ship : they hoisted up
 The stately mast : propitious breezes came ;
 They left the land : but I from death escaping,
 Let myself gently down into the waves
 Borne on the cordage which sustains the anchor ;
 My strength began to fail, when some kind hand
 Threw forth a rope, and brought me safe ashore,
 That I to you these tidings might convey.
 There's nought more beneficial to mankind
 Than wise distrust.

CHOR. I never could have thought
 That Menelaus who was here, O king,
 Could have imposed so grossly or on you
 Or upon us.

THEOC. Wretch that I am, ensnared
 By woman's treacherous arts ! the lovely bride
 I hoped for, hath escaped me. If the ship
Could be o'ertaken by our swift pursuit,

My wrongs would urge me with vindictive hand
To seize the strangers. But I now will punish
That sister who betrayed me ; in my house
Who when she saw the Spartan Menelaus,
Informed me not : she never shall deceive
Another man by her prophetic voice.

CHOR. Ho ! whither, O my sovereign, would you go,
And for what bloody purpose ?

THEOC. Where the voice
Of rigid justice summons me. Retire,
And stand aloof.

CHOR. Yet will not I let loose
Your garment ; for you hasten to commit
A deed most mischievous.

THEOC. Wouldst thou, a slave,
Govern thy lord ?

CHOR. Here reason's on my side.

THEOC. That shall not I allow, if thou refuse
To quit thy hold.

CHOR. I will not then release you.

THEOC. To slay that worst of sisters.

CHOR. That most pious.

THEOC. Her who betrayed me.

CHOR. Glorious was the fraud
That caused so just a deed.

THEOC. When she bestowed
My consort on another.

CHOR. On the man
Who had a better claim——

THEOC. But who is lord
Of what belongs to me ?

CHOR. Who from her sire
Received her.

THEOC. She by Fortune was bestowed
On me.

CHOR. But ta'en away again by Fate.

THEOC. Thou hast no right to judge of my affairs.

CHOR. If I but speak to give you better counsels.

THEOC. I am thy subject then, and not thy king.

CHOR. For having acted piously, your sister
I vindicate.

THEOC. Thou seem'st to wish for death.

CHOR. Kill me. Your sister you with my consent
Shall never slay ; I rather would yield up
My life on her behalf. It is most glorious
To generous servants for their lords to die.

CASTOR *and* POLLUX, THEOCLYMENUS, CHORUS.

CAS. *and* POI. Restrain that ire that hurries thee away
Beyond the bounds of reason, O thou king
Of Ægypt's realm; and listen to the voice
Of us twin sons of Jove, whom Leda bore
Together with that Helen who is fled
From thy abodes. Thou rashly hast indulged
Thine anger, for the loss of her whom Fate
Ne'er destined to thy bed. Nor hath thy sister
Theonoe, from th' immortal Nereid sprung,
To thee done any injury; she reveres
The gods, and her great father's just behests.
For till the present hour, was it ordained
That Helen in thy palace should reside:
But when Troy's walls were from their bases torn,
And she had to the rival goddesses
Furnished her name, no longer was it fit
That she should for thy nuptials be detained,
But to her ancient home return, and dwell
With her first husband. In thy sister's breast
Forbear to plunge the sword, and be convinced
That she in this affair hath acted wisely.
We long ere this our sister had preserved,
Since Jove hath made us gods, but were too weak
At once to combat the behests of Fate,
And the immortal powers, who had ordained
That these events should happen. This to thee,
O Theoclymenus, I speak. These words
Next to my lovely sister, I address;
Sail with your husband, for a prosperous breeze
Your voyage shall attend. We your protectors
And your twin brothers, on our coursers borne
Over the waves, will guide you to your country,
But after you have finished life's career,
You shall be called a goddess, shall partake
With us the rich oblations, and receive
The gifts of men: for thus hath Jove decreed.
But where the son of Maia placed you first,
When he had borne you from the Spartan realm,
And formed by stealth from the aerial mansions
An image of your person, to prevent
Paris from wedding you, there is an isle
Near the Athenian realm, which men shall call
Helen in future times, because that spot
Received you, when in secrecy conveyed
From Sparta. The Heavens also have ordained
The wanderer Menelaus shall reside
Among the happy islands. For the gods

To those of nobler minds no hatred bear ;
At their command though grievous toil await
The countless multitude.

THEOC. Ye sons of Jove
And Leda, I the contest will decline
Which I at first so violently urged,
Hoping your lovely sister to obtain,
And my own sister's life resolve to spare :
Let Helen to her native shores return,
If 'tis the will of Heaven : but be assured,
The same high blood ye spring from with the best
And chastest sister : hail then, for the sake
Of Helen with a lofty soul endued,
Such as in female bosoms seldom dwells.

CHOR. A thousand shapes our varying fates assume
The gods perform what least we could expect,
And oft the things for which we fondly hoped
Come not to pass; but Heaven still finds a clue
To guide our steps through life's perplexing maze,
And thus doth this important business end.

ANDROMACHE.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ANDROMACHE.	MOLOSSUS.
ATTENDANT.	PELEUS.
CHORUS OF PHTHIAN	NURSE OF HERMIONE.
WOMEN.	ORESTES.
HERMIONE.	MESSSENGER.
MENELAUS.	THETIS.

SCENE.—THE VESTIBULE OF THETIS' TEMPLE BETWEEN
PHTHIA AND PHARSALIA IN THESSALY.

ANDROMACHE.

O THEBES, thou pride of Asia, from whose gate
I came resplendent with a plenteous dower,
To Priam's regal house, the fruitful wife
Of Hector : his Andromache was erst
An envied name : but now am I more wretched
Than any woman, or already born,
Or to be born hereafter ; for I saw
My husband Hector by Achilles slain,
And that unhappy son whom to my lord
I bore, Astyanax, from Troy's high towers
Thrown headlong ; when our foes had sacked the city,
Myself descended from a noble line
Of freeborn warriors, reached the Grecian coast,
On Neoptolemus that island prince
For the reward of his victorious arms
Bestowed : selected from the Phrygian spoils.
'Twixt Pthia and Pharsalia, in these fields,
I dwell, where Thetis from the haunts of men
Retreating, with her Peleus erst abode.
By Thessaly's inhabitants, this spot
Is from th' auspicious nuptials of that goddess
Called Thetidæum : here Achilles' son
Residing, suffers Peleus still to rule
Pharsalia's land, nor will assume the sceptre
While lives his aged grandsire. In these walls

A son, who to th' embraces of my lord
Achilles' offspring, owes his birth, I bore,
And though I had been wretched, a fond hope
Still cherished, that while yet the boy was safe
I some protection and relief might find
In my calamities ; but since my lord
(Spurning my servile couch) that Spartan dame
Hermione espoused, with ruthless hate
By her am I pursued ; for she pretends
That I, by drugs endued with magic power,
Administered in secret, make her barren
And odious to her lord, because I wish
To occupy this mansion in her stead,
And forcibly to drive her from his couch,
To which, at first I with reluctance came,
But now have left it : mighty Jove can witness
That I became the partner of his bed
Against my own consent. But she remains
Deaf to conviction, and attempts to slay me :
In this design her father Menelaus
Assists his daughter, he is now within,
And on such errand left the Spartan realm :
Fearing his rage, I near the palace take
My seat, in Thetis' temple, that the goddess
From death may save me ; for both Peleus' self,
And the descendants of that monarch, hold
This structure reared in memory of his wedlock
With the fair Nereid, in religious awe.
But hence, in secret, trembling for his life,
My only child have I conveyed away,
Because his noble father is not present
To aid me, and avails not now to guard
His son, while absent in the Delphic land,
To expiate there the rage with which he sought
The Pythian tripod, and from Phœbus claimed
A reparation for his father's death.
If haply he can deprecate the curses
Attendant on his past misdeeds, and make
The god propitious to his future days.

FEMALE ATTENDANT, ANDROMACHE.

ATT. My queen, for still I scruple not to use
The same respectful title which I gave you
When we in Ilium dwelt ; you and your lord
While he was living, shared my duteous love,
And now I with important tidings fraught
To you am come, trembling indeed lest one
Of our new rulers overhear the tale,

Yet greatly pitying your disastrous fate :

For Menelaus and his daughter form

Dire plots against you ; of these foes beware.

AND. O my dear fellow-servant (for thou shar'st

Her bondage who was erst thy queen, but now

Is wretched), ah ! what mean they ? what fresh schemes

Have they devised to take away my life,

Who am by woes encompassed ?

ATT.

They intend,

O miserable dame, to kill your son,

Whom privately you from this house conveyed.

AND. Are they informed I sent the child away ?

Ah me ! who told them ? in what utter ruin

Am I involved !

ATT.

I know not ; but thus much

Of their designs I heard ; in quest of him

Is Menelaus from these doors gone forth.

AND. Then am I lost indeed : for, O my child,

These two relentless vultures mean to seize thee,

And take away thy life, while he who bears

A father's name, at Delphi still remains.

ATT. You had not fared so ill, I am convinced,

If he were present, but now every friend

Deserts you.

AND.

Is there not a rumour spread

Of Peleus' coming ?

ATT.

He, though he were here,

Is grown too old to aid you.

AND.

More than once

I sent to him.

ATT.

Suppose you that he heeds

None of your messengers ?

AND.

What means this question ?

Wilt thou accept such office ?

ATT.

What pretext

To colour my long absence from this house

Shall I allege ?

AND.

Full many are the schemes

Which thou, who art a woman, can devise.

ATT. 'Twere dangerous ; for Hermione is watchful.

AND. Dost thou perceive the danger, and renounce

Thy friends in their distress ?

ATT.

Not thus : forbear

To brand me with so infamous a charge :

I go ; for of small value is the life

(Whate'er befall me) of a female slave.

[*Exit ATTENDANT.*]

AND. Proceed : meanwhile I to the conscious air
Those plaints and bitter wailings will repeat,

With a large dower, that I might freely speak
 Such is the answer which to you I make,
 O Phthian dames. But thou, who art a slave
 And captive, wouldst in these abodes usurp
 Dominion, and expel me ; to my lord
 Thy drugs have made me odious, hence ensues
 My barrenness: the Asiatic dames,
 For these abhorred devices are renowned ;
 But thee will I subdue, nor shall this dome
 Of the immortal Nereid, nor her altar
 Or temple save thee from impending death ;
 If either man or god should be disposed
 To rescue thee, 'twere fit, that to atone
 For the proud thoughts thou in thy happier days
 Didst nourish, thou shouldst tremble, at my knees
 Fall low, and sweep the pavement of my house,
 Sprinkling the waters from a golden urn.
 Know where thou art : no Hector governs here,
 No Phrygian Priam doth this sceptre wield ;
 This is no Chrysa, but a Grecian city.
 Yet thou, O wretched woman, art arrived
 At such a pitch of madness, that thou dar'st
 To sleep e'en with the son of him who slew
 Thy husband, and a brood of children bear
 To him whose hands yet reek with Phrygian gore,
 Such is the whole abhorred barbarian race ;
 The father with his daughter, the vile son
 With his own mother, with her brother too
 The sister, sins, friends by their dearest friends
 Are murdered ; deeds like these no wholesome law
 Prohibits : introduce not among us
 Such crimes, for 'tis unseemly that one man
 Possess two women ; the fond youth who seeks
 Domestic harmony, confines his love
 To one fair partner of the genial bed.

CHOR. The female sex are envious, and pursue
 With an incessant hatred those who share
 Their nuptial joys.

AND. Alas ! impetuous youth
 Proves baleful to mankind, and there are none
 Who act with justice in their blooming years.
 But what I dread is this, lest slavery curb
 My tongue, though I have many truths to utter :
 In this dispute with you, if I prevail,
 That very triumph may become my bane :
 For those of haughty spirits ill endure
 The most prevailing arguments when urged
 By their inferiors. Yet my better cause
 I will not thus betray. Say, youthful princess,

What reasons of irrefragable force
 Enable me to drive you from the couch
 Of your own lawful husband? to the Phrygians
 Is Sparta grown inferior, and hath fortune
 On us conferred the palm? Do you behold me
 Still free? elate with youth, a vigorous frame,
 The wide extent of empire I possess,
 And number of my friends, am I desirous
 To occupy these mansions in your stead,
 That in your stead I might bring forth a race
 Of slaves, th' appendages of my distress?
 Will any one endure (if you produce
 No children) that my sons should be the kings
 Of Phthia?—the Greeks love me for the sake
 Of Hector, I too was forsooth obscure,
 And not a queen, in Troy. Your husband's hate,
 Not from my drugs, but from your soul, unsuited
 For social converse, springs: there is a philtre
 To gain his love. Not beauty, but the virtues,
 O woman, to the partners of our bed
 Afford delight. But if it sting your pride
 That Sparta's a vast city, while you treat
 Scyros with scorn, amidst the poor, display
 Your riches, and of Menelaus speak
 As greater than Achilles; hence your lord
 Abhors you. For a woman, though bestowed
 On a vile mate, should learn to yield, nor strive
 For the pre-eminence. In Thrace o'erspread
 With snow, if you were wedded to a king,
 Who to his bed takes many various dames,
 Would you have slain them? you would cast disgrace
 On your whole sex by such unsated lust;
 Base were the deed: for though our souls are warmed
 With more intense desires than those of men
 We modestly conceal them. For thy sake
 I, O my dearest Hector, loved the objects
 Of thy affections, whene'er Venus' wiles
 Caused thee to err, and at my breast full oft
 Nourished thy spurious children, that in nought
 Thy joys I might embitter: acting thus
 I won him by my virtues. But you tremble
 E'en if the drops of Heaven's transparent dew
 Rest on your husband. Strive not to transcend
 Your mother in a wild excess of love,
 O woman. For the children, if endued
 With reason, such examples should avoid
 Of those who bore them, as corrupt the soul.

CHOR. As far as possible, O queen, comply
 With my advice, and in mild terms accost her.

HER. What mean'st thou by this arrogance of speech,
This vain debate, as if thou still wert chaste,
And I had strayed from virtue's path?

AND. The words
You have been using, now at least are void
Of modesty.

HER. O woman, may this breast
Harbour no soul like thine.

AND. Though bashful youth
Glow on your cheek, indecent is your language.

HER. Thou by thy actions more than by thy words
Hast proved the malice which to me thou bear'st.

AND. Why will you not conceal th' inglorious pangs
Of jealous love?

HER. What woman but resents
Such wrongs, and deems them great?

AND. The use some make
Of these misfortunes adds to their renown :
But shame waits those who are devoid of wisdom.

HER. We dwell not in a city where prevail
Barbarian laws.

AND. In Phrygia or in Greece
Base actions are with infamy attended.

HER. Though most expert in every subtle art,
Yet die thou must.

AND. Behold you Thetis' image
Turning its eyes on you?

HER. She loathes thy country
Where her Achilles treacherously was slain.

AND. Your mother Helen caused his death, not I.

HER. Wouldst thou retrace still farther the sad tale
Of our misfortunes?

AND. I restrain my tongue.

HER. Speak to me now on that affair which caused
My coming hither.

AND. All I say is this :
You have not so much wisdom as you need.

HER. From this pure temple of the sea-born goddess
Wilt thou depart?

AND. Not while I live : you first
Must slay, then drag me hence.

HER. I am resolved
How to proceed, and wait my lord's return
No longer.

AND. Nor will I before he come
Surrender up myself.

HER. With flaming brands
Hence will I drive thee, and no deference pay
To thy entreaties.

AND. Kindle them; the gods
Will view the deed.

HER. The scourge too is prepared.

AND. Transpierce this bosom, deluge with my gore
The altar of the goddess, you by her
Shall be at length o'ertaken.

HER. From thy cradle,
Trained up and hardened in barbarian pride,
Canst thou endure to die? from this asylum
Soon will I rouse thee by thy own consent,
I with such baits am furnished, but conceal
My purpose, which th' event itself ere long
Will make conspicuous. Keep a steady seat,
For though by molten lead thou wert enclosed
Hence would I rouse thee, ere Achilles' son,
Whom thou confid'st in, to this land return.

[Exit HERMIONE.]

AND. In him I place my still unshaken trust.
Yet is it strange that the celestial powers,
To heal the serpent's venom, have assigned
Expedients, but no remedy devised
Against an evil woman who surpasses
Or vipers' stings or the consuming flame :
Thus baleful is our influence on mankind.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

The winged son of Maia and of Jove
To many sorrowful events gave birth,
And scattered discord o'er the bleeding earth,
When he through sacred Ida's piny grove
Guided the car of three immortal dames,
(The golden prize of beauty to obtain,
In hateful strife engaged, who urged their claims);
To where in his mean hut abode a lonely swain.

I. 2.

No sooner had they reached the destined bower,
Than in the limpid spring her snowy frame
Each goddess laved; to Priam's son then came
With artful speeches of such winning power
As might beguile the rash and amorous boy :
Venus prevailed; her words, though sweet their sound,
Proved of destructive consequence to Troy,
Whose stately bulwarks hence lie levelled with the ground.

II. 1.

When new-born Paris first beheld the light,
 Would that his mother, o'er her head, this brand
 Ordained by Heaven to fire his native land,
 Had cast, before he dwelt on Ida's height.
 Unheeded from the bay's prophetic shade
 Exclaimed Cassandra : " Let the child be slain ;
 Kill him, or Priam's empire is betrayed."
 Frantic she raved and sued to every prince in vain.

II. 2.

Deaf was each prince, or Ilion ne'er had felt
 The servile yoke, nor hadst thou, hapless fair,
 Beneath these roofs, encompassed by despair,
 And subject to a rigid master, dwelt.
 O had he died, the fated toil of Greece,
 That stubborn war through ten revolving years,
 Had roused no heroes from the lap of peace,
 Nor caused the widow's shrieks, the hoary father's tears.

MENELAUS, MOLOSSUS, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

MEN. Your son I hither bring, whom from this fane
 With secrecy, you to another house,
 Without my daughter's knowledge, had removed.
 You boasted that this image of the goddess
 To you, and those who hid him, would afford
 A sure asylum : but your deep-laid craft,
 O woman, cannot baffle Menelaus.
 If you depart not hence, he in your stead
 Shall be the victim ; therefore well revolve
 Th' important question ; had you rather die,
 Or, with his streaming gore, let him atone
 The foul offence 'gainst me and 'gainst my daughter
 By you committed ?

AND. Thou, O vain opinion,
 Hast with renown puffed up full many men
 Who were of no account. I deem those blest
 On whom with truth such honour is bestowed :
 But them who by fallacious means obtain it
 I hold unworthy of possessing fame,
 When all their seeming wisdom but arises
 From Fortune's gifts. Thou with the bravest chiefs
 Of Greece, from Priam erst didst wrest his Troy ;
 E'en thou who art so mean as to inspire
 Thy daughter with resentment 'gainst a child,
 And strive with me a miserable captive :
 Unworthy of thy conquest over Troy

Thee do I hold, and Troy yet more disgraced
By such a victor. Some indeed there are
To all appearance upright, who awhile
Outwardly glitter, though they in their hearts
Are on a level with the worthless bulk
Of mortals, and superior but in wealth
Whose power is great. This conference let us end,
O Menelaus, be it now supposed
I by thy daughter am already slain :
'Twill be impossible for her to 'scape
From the pollution ruthless murder brings ;
Thou too by many tongues wilt be accused
Of this vile deed, with her will they confound
Thee the abettor. But if I preserve
My life, are ye resolved to slay my son ?
How will the father tamely bear the death
Of his loved offspring ? he was not esteemed
At Troy so void of courage. He is gone
Whither his duty calls. Soon will the chief
Act worthy of the race from which he springs,
The hoary Peleus, and his dauntless sire
Achilles, he from these abodes will cast
Thy daughter forth, and when thou to another
In marriage giv'st her, what hast thou to say
On her behalf ? " That from a worthless lord
Her wisdom drove her ? " This would be a falsehood
Too gross. But who would wed her ? till grown grey
In widowhood, shall she beneath thy roofs
Fix her loathed residence ? O wretched man,
The rising conflux of unnumbered woes
Behold'st thou not ? hadst thou not rather find
Thy daughter wronged by concubines, than suffering
Th' indignities I speak of ? we from trifles
Such grievous mischiefs ought not to create ;
Nor if we women are a deadly bane,
To the degenerate nature of our sex
Should men conform. If I pernicious drugs
Have to thy daughter ministered, and been,
As she pretends, the cause of her abortion,
Immediately will I without reluctance,
And without grovelling at this altar's base,
To any rigid punishment submit
Inflicted by thy son-in-law, from whom
I surely merit as severe revenge
For having made him childless. Such am I :
But in thy temper I perceive one cause
Of just alarm, since in that luckless strife
About a woman, and a vile one too,
Thou the famed Phrygian city didst destroy.

CHOR. Too freely hast thou spoken, in a tone
Which ill becomes thy sex, and that high soul
The bounds of wisdom hath o'erleaped.

MEN.

O woman,

So small an object, as you rightly judge,
Deserves not the attention of my realm,
Nor that of Greece. But learn this obvious truth :
To any man whate'er he greatly needs,
Is of more worth by far than taking Troy.
My daughter I assist, because I deem it
A wrong of great importance should she lose
Her bridal rights: for every woman looks
On all beside as secondary ills :
But if she from her husband's arms be torn,
Seems reft of life itself. That Phthia's prince
Direct my servants, and that his obey
Me and my race, is fitting: for true friends
Have no distinct possessions, but hold all
In common. While I wait for the return
Of her long absent lord, should I neglect
My daughter's interests, I were weak, not wise.
But leave this shrine of Thetis: for the child
Shall if you bleed escape th' impending doom :
Him, if you die not, will I slay, since fate
Of you or him the forfeit life demands.

AND. Ah me ! a bitter and unwelcome choice
Of life on terms like these hast thou proposed ;
Wretch that I am ! for whether I decline
Or make such option, I am wretched still.
O thou, who by a trifling wrong provoked,
Committ'st great crimes, attend: for what offence
Wouldst thou bereave me of my life ? what city
Have I betrayed ? what child of thine destroyed ?
What mansion fired ? I to my master's bed
By force was dragged : yet me alone, not him
The author of that crime, thou mean'st to slay.
Thou, the first cause o'erlooking, on th' effect
Which it produces, vent'st thy rage. What woes
Encompass wretched me ! alas ! my country !
How dreadful are the wrongs which I endure !
But wherefore was I doomed to bear a child,
And to the burden under which I groan
Add a new burden ? what delight can life
To me afford ? or on what fortunes past
Or present should I turn these eyes which saw
The corse of Hector by the victor's car
Whirled round the walls, and wretched Troy a heap
Of blazing ruins ? I meantime a slave
By my dishevelled hair was dragged aboard
The Argive navy ; when I reached the coast

Of Phthia, and cohabited with those
 Who slew my Hector ; (but why lavish plaints
 On past calamities, without deploring
 Or taking a due estimate of those
 Which now impend ?) I had this only son
 My life's last comfort left, and they who take
 Delight in deeds of cruelty, would slay him ;
 Yet to preserve my miserable life
 He shall not perish ; for auspicious hopes,
 Could he be saved, his future days attend :
 But if I died not for my son, reproach
 Would be my portion. Lo ! I leave the altar
 And now am in thy hands, stab, slay me, bind,
 Strain hard the deadly noose. My son, thy mother,
 To rescue thee from an untimely grave,
 Descends the shades beneath ; if thou escape
 The ruthless grasp of fate, remember me
 How miserably I suffered ; and with kisses,
 At his return, when thou goest forth to meet
 Thy father, when a flood of tears thou shedd'st,
 And cling'st around him with those pliant arms,
 Inform him how I acted. All men hold
 Their children dear as life ; but he who scorns them
 Because he ne'er experienced what it is
 To be a father, though with fewer griefs
 Attended, but enjoys imperfect bliss.

[Rises, and advances from the altar.]

CHOR. I with compassion to this moving tale
 Have listened ; for distress, to all mankind,
 Though strangers, must seem piteous : but on thee,
 O Menelaus, 'tis incumbent now
 To reconcile thy daughter, and this captive,
 That she may from her sorrows be released.

MEN. Seize her, and bind her hands ; for she shall hear
 No pleasing language : I proposed to slay
 Your son, that you might leave that hallowed altar
 Of Thetis, and thus craftily induced you
 To fall into my hands, and meet your death ;
 Be well assured, such is the present state
 Of your affairs : as for that boy, on him
 My daughter shall pass judgment, or to kill,
 Or spare him : but now enter these abodes,
 Thit you may learn, slave as you are, to treat
 Those who are free no longer with disdain.

AND. Thou hast o'erreached me by thy treacherous arts ;
 Alas ! I am betrayed.

MEN. Proclaim these tidings
 To all men ; for I shall not contradict them.

AND. By those who dwell beside Eurotas' stream
 Are such base frauds called wisdom ?

MEN. Both at Troy
And there, 'tis just the injured should retaliate.
AND. Believ'st thou that the gods are gods no longer,
Nor wield the bolt of vengeance?
MEN. We must look
To that : but you shall die.
AND. And wilt thou seize
This unfledged bird, to slay him?
MEN. No, I will not,
But give him to my daughter, who must act
As she thinks fit.
AND. Then how, alas, my son !
Can I sufficiently bewail thy fate?
MEN. " Him," 'twas but now with arrogance you said,
" Auspicious hopes attend."
AND. Ye worst of foes
To all mankind, inhabitants of Sparta !
Expert in treacherous counsels, still devising
New falsehoods, curst artificers of mischief,
Your paths are crooked, yet though void of worth,
Through Greece by circumspection ye uphold
An undeserved pre-eminence. What crimes,
What murders, what a thirst for abject gain
Characterize your realm ! with specious tongue
Uttering a language foreign to your heart,
Are ye not ever caught ? Perdition seize you !
Death is less grievous than thou deem'st to me
Who date my utter ruin from that hour
When Ilion's wretched city was involved
In the same fate with my illustrious lord,
Whose spear oft drove thee trembling from the field
Into thy ships : but now against his wife
A formidable warrior art thou come
To murder me : strike, for this coward tongue
Shall never leave thine and thy daughter's shame
Unpublished. If in Sparta thou art great,
So was I erst in Ilion ; but exult not
In my disasters, for on thee ere long
The same reverse of fortune may attend.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

Two rival consorts ne'er can I approve,
Or sons, the source of strife, their birth who owe
To different mothers ; hence connubial love
Is banished, and the mansion teems with woe.

One blooming nymph let cautious husbands wed,
And share with her alone an unpolluted bed.

I. 2.

No prudent city, no well-governed state,
More than a single potentate will own ;
Their subjects droop beneath the grievous weight
When two bear rule, and discord shakes the throne ;
And if two bards awake their sounding lyres
E'en the harmonious Muse a cruel strife inspires,

II. I.

To aid the bark, when prosperous gales arise,
Two jarring pilots shall misguide the helm :
Weak is a multitude when all are wise,
One simpler monarch could have saved the realm.
Let a sole chief the house or empire sway,
And all who hope for bliss their lord's behests obey.

II. 2.

This truth hath Menelaus' daughter shown,
Furious she comes the victim to destroy ;
And, that their blood may nuptial wrongs atone,
The Phrygian captive, and that hapless boy,
With impious rage unjust would cause to bleed ;
May pity, awful queen, thy lifted arm impede !

But I before these doors behold the pair
On whom the fatal sentence now is passed.
Thou wretched dame, and wretched child who diest
Because thy mother to a foreign bed
By force was dragged, in her imputed guilt
Thou wert not an accomplice, thou thy lords
Hast not offended.

AND. To the realms beneath,
Lo, I am hurried, with these bloody hands
Fast bound in galling chains.

MOL. I too, O mother,
Under thy wing, to those loathed shades descend
A victim. O ye lords of Phthia's land,
And thou, my father, succour those thou lov'st.

AND. Cling to thy mother's bosom, O my child,
Together let us die.

MOL. Ah me ! how grievous
My sufferings are ! too clearly I perceive
That I, and thou my mother, both are wretched.

MEN. Go both together to th' infernal realm :
For ye from hostile turrets hither came.
Although the cause why you and he must bleed
Is not the same, my sentence takes away

Your life, and my Hermione's your son's.
 The highest folly were it to permit
 A foe to live and vex us, whom with ease
 We might despatch, and from our house remove
 Such danger.

AND. O my husband, would to Heaven
 I had thy arm to aid me ; and thy spear,
 Thou son of Priam.

MOL. Wretched me ! what charm
 Can I devise t' avert impending fate ?

AND. My son, implore the mercy of our lord
 Clasp his knees.

MOL. Dear monarch, spare my life,
 AND. Tears from these eyes burst forth like trickling drops
 By the sun's heat forced from a solid rock,
 Wretch that I am !

MOL. What remedy, alas !
 For these dire evils can my soul devise ?

MEN. Why dost thou idly grovel at my feet
 With fruitless supplications, while I stand
 Firm as a rock, or as th' un pitying wave ?
 Such conduct serves my interests : no affection
 To thee I bear, because my morn of life
 Was wasted in the conflict, ere I took
 Troy and thy mother, whose society
 Thou in the realms of Pluto shalt enjoy.

PELEUS, MENELAUS, ANDROMACHE, MOLOSSUS, CHORUS.

CHOR. Peleus, I see, draws near, his aged feet
 With eager haste advancing.

PEL. You, and him
 Who stands presiding o'er a murderous deed,
 What means this uproar that disturbs the house,
 I question, and what practices are these
 Ye carry on unauthorized by law ?
 O Menelaus, stay thy furious hand,
 And let not execution thus outstrip
 All righteous judgment. O my friends, lead on ;
 For such a dread emergency appears
 T' admit of no delay. Could I regain
 That youthful vigour which I erst enjoyed
 As prosperous breezes aid the floating sails,
 This captive would I favour. Say, what right
 Have they to bind your hands, and drag along
 You and your son ? for like the bleating mother,
 Led forth to slaughter with her lamb, you perish,
 While I and your unwitting lord are absent.

AND. They, as thou seest, O venerable man,
Me and my son thus bear to instant death.

What shall I say to thee, whom I with speed
 Not by one single messenger but thousands
 Have sent for? sure thou, of the fatal strife
 In these divided mansions, with his daughter,
 To which I owe my ruin, must have heard :
 And from the violated shrine of Thetis,
 Who bore to thee a noble son, the goddess
 Whom thou rever'st e'en now with brutal force
 Me have they torn, nor judged my cause, nor wait
 For absent Neoptolemus, but, knowing
 That I and that this child who hath committed
 No fault, are left alone and unprotected,
 Would slay us both. But, O thou aged man,
 Thus prostrate on my knees, to thee I sue,
 And, though this hand must not presume to touch
 Thy honoured beard, conjure thee by the gods,
 Rescue us, or to thy eternal shame
 Both he and I must miserably bleed.

PEL. My orders are that you those galling chains
 Unbind and loose her hands, else will I make
 The disobedient weep.

MEN. But I, your equal,
 Who have much more authority o'er her,
 Forbid them.

PEL. Com'st thou hither to direct
 My household? is it not enough for thee
 To rule thy Spartans?

MEN. Her I took at Troy.

PEL. She, to reward his valour, was bestowed
 Upon my grandson.

MEN. Doth not all he owns,
 To me, and what is mine, to him belong?

PEL. For honest purposes, but not for crimes
 And murderous violence.

MEN. You ne'er shall take her
 Out of my hands.

PEL. Thy head I with this sceptre
 Will smite.

MEN. Draw near; if you presume to touch me,
 Soon shall you rue such outrage.

PEL. O thou villain,
 Sprung from a race of impious sires, what right
 To be accounted an illustrious man,
 And numbered with the truly brave, hast thou,
 Who by a Phrygian wanderer wert deprived
 Of thy fair consort, after thou hadst left
 Thy house unbarred and destitute of guards,
 As if thou in thy mansions hadst possessed
 A virtuous dame, though she of all her sex

Was the most dissolute? nor if she would
Can any Spartan nymph be chaste? for wandering
From their own homes, distinguished by bare legs,
And zoneless vest, they with young men contend
In swiftness and in wrestling; I such customs
Hold in abhorrence. Is there any room
For wonder if the women prove unchaste
Whom thus you educate? thy Helen ought
To have proposed these questions, ere she left
Her native realm, regardless of thy love,
And by that youthful paramour seduced,
Wantonly fled into a foreign land.
Yet for her sake didst thou that numerous host
Of Greeks collect, and lead them to assail
The Phrygian ramparts. Thou that beauteous dame
Shouldst rather have despised, nor in her cause
Wielded the javelin, when thou found'st her worthless,
But suffered her in Ilion to remain,
And sent rich gifts to Paris on these terms,
That to thy house she never should return.
But thou, instead of suffering these just motives
To make their due impression on thy soul,
Full many valiant warriors hast destroyed,
Made th' aged matron childless, and deprived
Of his illustrious sons the hoary sire.
Numbered with those who owe to thee thy ruin
Am wretched I: for like some evil genius
In thee do these indignant eyes behold
The murderer of Achilles: thou alone,
Save by the missile shaft, unwounded cam'st
From Ilion's hostile shores; in burnished chests
Didst thou bear thither the same glittering arms
Which thou bear'st back again. Before he wedded,
I warned my grandson to form no connection
With thee, nor into these abodes admit
The brood of that adult'ress; for the daughters
Their mother emulate in deeds of shame.
Look well to this, ye suitors, and select
The damsel with maternal worth endued.
Then with what scorn didst thou thy brother treat,
Commanding him 'gainst reason to transgress,
And sacrifice his daughter. Thou such fears,
Lest thou that execrable wife shouldst lose,
Didst entertain. When thou hadst taken Troy,
This too I urge against thee, though thou hadst
Thy consort in thy power, thou didst not slay her,
But when her throbbing bosom thou beheld'st
Didst cast away thy sword, receive her kisses,
And soothe the fears of her who had betrayed thee.

O worthless miscreant, whom the Cyprian Queen
 Hath thus debased ! thou after this intrud'st
 Into my grandson's palace, in his absence
 Committ'st these outrages, and basely slay'st
 A miserable woman, and her child,
 Thee and thy daughter who shall cause to weep
 Though trebly illegitimate his birth.
 Oft the parched heath, when duly tilled, exceeds
 The richest soil, and greater instances
 Of virtue are in many-a bastard found
 Than in the lawfully begotten race.
 But take thy daughter hence. Far better is it
 To form affinity and strictest friendship
 With a poor man of worth, than him who joins
 Iniquity with wealth : but as for thee,
 Thou art a thing of nought.

CHOR. Among mankind,
 Oft from a small beginning doth the tongue
 Great strife occasion : but the wise beware
 Of entering on a contest with their friend.

MEN. Why do we speak in such exalted terms
 Of aged men, as if they were endued
 With wisdom, though in former days supposed
 By the whole Grecian race to judge aright ?
 When you, O Peleus, who derive your birth
 From an illustrious sire, and with my house
 So nearly are connected, hold a language
 Disgraceful to yourself, and slander me,
 For a barbarian dame, whom from this land
 You ought to banish far beyond the Nile,
 Beyond the Phasis, and applaud my vengeance ;
 Because she comes from Asiatic shores,
 Where many valiant Grecian chiefs lie slain.
 And hath in part been guilty of the blood
 Of your famed son ; for Paris, by whose shaft,
 Transpierced, Achilles perished, was the brother,
 And she the wife of Hector : yet you enter
 The same abode with her, the genial board
 With her partake, allow her to bring forth
 Under your roofs an execrable brood.
 These mischiefs both to you and me, old man,
 Foreseeing, have I snatched her from your hands
 With a design to kill her. But, O say,
 (For there is nought of meanness in our holding
 This conference), if my daughter bear no child,
 And she have sons, will you appoint them lords
 Of this your Phthian land ? shall they who spring
 From a barbarian race, o'er Greeks bear rule ?
 Am I, because I hate injustice, void

Of understanding, and are you discreet?
 Reflect on this ; had you bestowed your daughter
 On any citizen, were she thus treated,
 Would you sit down and bear her wrongs in silence?
 I deem you would not. Why then with such harshness
 Speak you in favour of a foreign dame
 Against your nearest friends? as great a right
 To vengeance as her husband, hath the wife
 Whom her lord injures : for while he whose doors
 An unchaste consort enters, in his hands
 Hath power to right himself, a woman's strength
 Lies only in her parents and her friends.
 My daughter, therefore, am I bound to aid :
 You show the marks of age : for while you talk
 Of that famed war I waged, you more befriend me
 Than if you had been silent. Deep in woe
 Was Helen plunged, not by her own consent
 But by the gods : and this event hath proved
 To Greece most advantageous, for its sons
 Who knew not how till then to wield the spear,
 Grew valiant. From experience, best of tutors,
 Men gather all the knowledge they possess.
 But when I saw my consort, in forbearing
 To take away her life, I acted wisely :
 And would that you had done like me, nor slain
 Your brother Phocus ; this to you I speak
 Through mere benevolence, and not in wrath :
 But if resentment o'er your soul usurp
 An empire, such intemperance of the tongue
 Will be in you more shameful, while my wishes
 I by a prudent forethought shall attain.

CHOR. Now both desist (for this were better far)
 From such unprofitable strife of words,
 O ye will both offend.

PEL. Ah me ! through Greece
 What mischievous opinions have prevailed !
 When with the spoils of vanquished foes, the host
 A trophy rear, they think not how 'twas gained
 By those brave soldiers who endure the toil
 Of battle, while their general bears away
 All the renown : though he was only one
 Who stood 'midst thousands brandishing his spear,
 Nor any single combatant surpassed,
 He gains a larger portion of applause.
 The venerable rulers of a city,
 Placed in exalted stations, yet devoid
 Of any real merit, overlook
 The populace, though many in the crowd
 Of their inferiors are more wise than they,

If haply courage and an honest zeal
 Unite to place them in the public view.
 Thou and thy brother thus are swollen with pride,
 From having led those troops to conquer Troy,
 And triumph in the sufferings of your friends.
 But henceforth will I teach thee not to look
 On Paris, Ida's shepherd, as a foe,
 More terrible than Peleus. If with speed
 Thou quit not these abodes, and take away
 Thy childless daughter, my indignant grandson,
 By her dishevelled hair around the palace
 Will drag this barren dame, who stung with envy,
 Cannot endure the fruitful mother's joys.
 But, if she prove so luckless as to bare
 No issue, ought she therefore to deprive us
 Of our posterity? Begone, ye slaves,
 That I may see who dares obstruct my loosing
 Her hands. Rise up: though trembling with old age,
 Your chains can I unbind. O worthless man,
 Hast thou thus galled her hands? didst thou suppose
 Thou held'st a bull or lion in the snare?
 Or didst thou shudder lest she should snatch up
 A sword, and wreak just vengeance on thy head?
 Come hither to these sheltering arms, my child,
 Unbind thy mother's chains; in Phthia, thee
 I'll educate, to them a bitter foe.
 Should Sparta's sons by the protended spear
 Obtain no fame, nor in th' embattled field
 Their prowess signalize, be well assured
 Ye have no other merit.

CHOR. Old men talk
 With freedom, and their vehemence of soul
 Is hard to be restrained.

MEN. Extremely prone
 Are you to slander; much against my will
 I came to Phthia, and am here resolved
 That I will neither do nor suffer aught
 Disgraceful: but to my own home with speed
 Am I returning, and have little time
 In vain debates to lavish: for a city
 Not far from Sparta's gates and erst a friend
 Is waging war against us: I would lead
 My hardy squadrons forth t' assail the foe,
 And utterly subdue them. To my wish
 Soon as this great affair I shall have settled,
 Hither will I return, and face to face,
 When I my reasons to my son-in-law
 Have in the clearest terms proposed, will hear
 What he can urge; and if he punish her,

And for the future courteously to me
 Demean himself, from me he in return
 Shall meet with courtesy ; but if he rage,
 He of my rage the dire effects shall feel :
 For still such treatment as his deeds deserve
 Shall he experience. But I am not hurt
 By these injurious words of yours ; for like
 Some disembodied ghost, you have a voice,
 Although you are not able to do aught
 But merely speak. [Exit MENELAUS.]

PEL. Lead on, my boy ; here take
 Thy station under these protecting arms ;
 And thou too, O thou miserable dame,
 Driven hither by the furious storm ; at length
 Into a quiet haven are ye come.

AND. On thee and thy descendants may the gods
 Shower every blessing, venerable man,
 For having saved this child, and wretched me ;
 Yet O beware, lest in some lonely spot
 They suddenly assail us, and by force
 Drag me away, perceiving thou art old,
 That I am a weak woman, and my son
 Is but an infant : all precautions use,
 Else we, who have escaped them, may again
 Be caught.

PEL. Forbear to utter, in such language
 As this, the dictates of a woman's fear.
 Advance, who dares to touch you ? he shall weep.
 For with the blessing of th' immortal gods,
 And by unnumbered troops of valiant horse,
 And infantry supported, I bear rule
 Over the Phthian land. I am robust,
 Nor, as you deem, impaired by palsied age.
 Were I, opposed in battle, but to look
 On such a man as this, old as I am,
 An easy conquest soon should I obtain.
 Superior is the veteran, if with courage
 Inspired, to many youths : for what avails
 A vigorous body with a coward's heart ?
[Exeunt PELEUS, ANDROMACHE, and MOLOSSUS.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

My wish were this ; or never to be born,
 Or to descend from generous sires, and share
 The blessings which attend a wealthy heir.
 If heaviest woes assail, ne'er left forlorn

Without a friend are they of nobler race,
 Hereditary trophies deck their head :
 The records of the brave with joy we trace,
 No distant age their memory can efface,
 For virtue's torch unquenched pours radiance o'er the dead.

II.

Better is conquest, when we gain our right
 By no reproachful means, no deeds of shame,
 Than if to envy we expose our fame,
 And trample on the laws with impious might.
 Such laurels which at first too sweetly bloom,
 Ere long are withered by the frost of time,
 And scorn pursues their wearers to the tomb.
 I in my household or the state presume
 To seek that power alone which rules without a crime.

III.

O veteran, sprung from Æacus, thy spear
 Chilled the Lapithæ with fear,
 And from their hills the Centaurs drove.
 When glory called, and prosperous gales
 Swelled the Argo's daring sails,
 Intrepid didst thou pass that strait
 Where ruin oft the crashing bark attends,
 And ocean's foam descends
 From the Symplegades' obstructing height.
 Next didst thou land on perjured Ilion's shore,
 With Hercules illustrious son of Jove,
 Then first its bulwarks streamed with gore :
 Till crowned with fame a partner of his toil,
 Europe again thou sought'st and Phthia's frozen soil.

THE NURSE OF HERMIONE, CHORUS.

NUR. How doth a rapid series of events
 The most disastrous, O my dearest friends,
 This day invade us ! for within these doors
 Hermione my mistress, by her sire
 Forsaken, and grown conscious of the guilt
 She hath incurred, by that attempt to murder
 Andromache and her unhappy son,
 Resolves to die, because she dreads, lest fired
 With indignation at her guilt, her lord
 Should cast her forth with scorn, or take away
 Her life, because she purposed to have slain
 The innocent. The servants who attend
 Can hardly by their vigilance prevent her
 From fixing round her neck the deadly noose,
 Or snatch the dagger from her hand, so great

Is her affliction, and she now confesses
That she has done amiss. My strength's exhausted
In striving to withhold my royal mistress
From perishing by an ignoble death.
But enter ye these mansions, and attempt
To save her life, for strangers can persuade
Far better than old friends.

CHOR. We hear the voice
Of her attendants from within confirm
Th' intelligence thou hither cam'st to bring :
That hapless woman seems just on the point
Of showing with what rage she by her guilt
Is hurried on : for lo, she rushes forth
From yon abodes, already hath she 'scaped
Her servants' hands, and is resolved to die.

HERMIONE, NURSE, CHORUS.

HER. Ah me ! these ringlets how will I tear off,
How rend my cheeks !

NUR. What mean'st thou, O my daughter ?
Wilt thou thus injure that fair frame ?

HER. Away,
O thou slight veil, I pluck thee from my head,
And toss thy scattered fragments in the air.

NUR. Cover thy bosom with the decent robe.

HER. Why with a robe my bosom should I hide ?
The crimes I have committed 'gainst my lord
Are clear, well known, and cannot be concealed.

NUR. Griev'st thou because thou hast formed schemes
to slay

Thy rival ?

HER. I with many groans bewail
Those hostile darings, execrable wretch,
Wretch that I am, an object of just hate
To all mankind.

NUR. Thy husband such offence
Will pardon.

HER. From my hand why didst thou snatch
The sword ? Restore, restore it, O my friends,
That I this bosom may transpierce. Why force me
To quit yon pendant noose ?

NUR. In thy distraction
Shall I forsake and leave thee thus to die ?

HER. Where shall I find (inform me, O ye Fates)
The blazing pyre, ascend the craggy rock,
Plunge in the billows, or amidst the woods
On a steep mountain waste the life I loathe,
That after death the gods beneath may take me
To their protection ?

CHOR. Why wouldst thou make efforts
So violent? some mischiefs sent by Heaven
Sooner or later visit all mankind.

HER. Me like a stranded bark, thou, O my sire,
Hast left forsaken and without an oar.
To thee I owe my ruin. I no longer
In these my bridal mansions can reside.
To the propitious statues of what God
With suppliant haste shall I repair, or fall
At a slave's knees, myself an abject slave?
I from the land of Phthia, like a bird
Upborne on azure wings, would speed my flight,
Or imitate that ship whose dashing oars
'Twixt the Cyanean straits first urged their way.

NUR. As little, O my daughter, can I praise
That vehemence which caused thee to transgress
Against the Trojan dame, as these thy fears
Which are immoderate. For such slight offence
Thy lord, misled by the pernicious tongue
Of a barbarian woman, from his couch
Will not expel thee: for thou art not his
By right of conquest, borne from vanquished Troy;
But thee, the daughter of a mighty king,
He with abundant dower, and from a city
Most flourishing, received: nor will thy sire,
His child forsaking, as thou dread'st, permit thee
To be cast forth: but enter these abodes,
Nor show thyself without, lest some affront
Thou shouldst receive if haply thou art seen
Before these doors. [Exit NURSE.]

CHOR. Behold a man, whose dress
Is of such different fashion that it speaks
The foreigner, comes swiftly from the gate.

ORESTES, HERMIONE, CHORUS.

ORE. Is this th' abode of great Achilles' son,
The regal mansion, O ye foreign dames?

CHOR. It is as thou hast said. But who art thou
That ask'st this question?

ORE. Agamemnon's son,
And Clytemnestra's; but my name's Orestes:
I to Dodona, th' oracle of Jove,
Am on my road; but since I now have reached
The land of Phthia, first would I inquire
How fares Hermione, the Spartan dame,
My kinswoman; doth she yet live and prosper?
For though from me far distant be the land
In which she now resides, she still is dear.

HER. O son of Agamemnon, who thus make

Your seasonable appearance, like the haven
 To mariners amidst a furious storm,
 Take pity, I implore you by those knees,
 On me a wretch whose inauspicious fortunes
 You witness. Hence around your knees I fling
 These arms, which ought to prove of equal force
 With hallowed branches by the suppliant borne.

ORE. What's this? am I deceived? or do my eyes
 Indeed behold the queen of these abodes,
 And Menelaus' daughter?

HER. Th' only child
 Whom to the Spartan monarch Helen bore.
 Mistake me not.

ORE. O Phœbus, healing power,
 Protect us! But what dire mischance hath happened?
 Or from the gods, or human foes, proceed
 The evils thou endur'st?

HER. Some from myself,
 But others from the husband whom I wedded
 The rest from one of the immortal gods.
 I utterly am ruined.

ORE. What afflictions
 Can any woman who's yet childless feel
 But those which from her nuptial union spring?

HER. Hence these distempers of the soul arise,
 And well do you anticipate my words.

ORE. Enamoured with another, is thy lord
 False to thy bed?

HER. He loves a captive dame,
 The wife of Hector.

ORE. This of which thou speak'st
 Is a great evil, when one man possesses
 Two wives.

HER. 'Twas thus, till I avenged the wrong.

ORE. Didst thou with arts familiar to thy sex
 Plot 'gainst thy rival's life?

HER. I would have killed
 Her and her spurious son.

ORE. Hast thou despatched them?
 Or were they screened from their impending fate?

HER. Old Peleus to these worthless objects showed
 Too great a reverence.

ORE. Was there any friend
 Ready to aid thee in the purposed slaughter?

HER. My sire, who for this cause from Sparta came.

ORE. Yet by that aged man was he subdued?

HER. Abashed he fled, and left me here alone.

ORE. I understand thee well: thy husband's wrath
 Thou fear'st for what thou'st done.

HER. The fact you know :
 Hence justly will he take away my life.
 What can be said ? yet by immortal Jove,
 Our grandsire, I conjure you, send me far
 From these domains, or to my father's house.
 Had but these walls a voice, they would proclaim
 The sentence of my exile, for the land
 Of Phthia hates me. If my lord return
 From Phœbus' oracle, for the misdeeds
 I have committed, he will strike me dead,
 Or force me to become that harlot's slave
 Whom erst I ruled.

ORE. By some will it be asked
 Whence then into such errors didst thou fall ?

HER. My ruin I derive from the admission
 Of these vile women, who inflamed my pride
 By uttering these rash words : " Wilt thou endure
 Beneath thy roof that odious slave who shares
 Thy bridal couch ? by Juno, awful queen,
 I would not suffer such a wretch to breathe
 In my polluted chamber." When I heard
 The language uttered by these crafty sirens,
 Artificers of mischief, who, to suit
 Their purpose, in persuasive strains displayed
 The power of eloquence, I was puffed up
 With folly : for what need had I to hold
 My lord in reverence while possessed of all
 That I could wish ? abundant wealth was mine,
 O'er these abodes I reigned, and any children
 I to my husband might hereafter bare
 Would be legitimate ; but hers, by mine
 In strict subjection held, a spurious race.
 But never, never (I this truth repeat)
 Should wedded men, who have the gift of reason,
 Let women have a free access, and visit
 Their consort. For they teach her evil lessons :
 Urged by the hopes of lucre, one corrupts
 Her chastity ; a second hath already
 Transgressed herself, and wishes that her friend
 May be as vicious : many by their lust
 Are led astray : hence to their husband's house
 A train of mischief rises. Guard the doors
 Of your abodes with locks and massive bars ;
 Since from the intrusion of these female guests,
 No good, but mischiefs numberless ensue.

CHOR. Thou to thy tongue hast given too free a
 scope

In thus aspersing the whole female race :
 Thy present woes indeed our pardon claim ;

Yet every woman is in duty bound
To gloss o'er the misconduct of her sex.

ORE. Wisdom pertained to him who taught mankind
To hear the reasons by both parties urged
In a debate. Aware of the confusion
In these abodes, and of the strife 'twixt thee
And Hector's wife, I stayed not to observe
Whether thou in this house wouldst still remain,
Or through a fear of yonder captive dame
Abandon it : I therefore hither came,
Nor waited for intelligence from thee.
And if a satisfactory account
Of thy proceedings thou to me canst give,
I will convey thee hence. For thou, who erst
Wert mine, with this thy present husband liv'st,
Through the perfidious conduct of thy sire,
Who ere he entered the domains of Troy
Affianced thee to me, and then to him
Who now possesses thee, again engaged,
If he the Phrygian city should subdue.
But I forgive thy father for this wrong,
When hither great Achilles' son returned,
And to the bridegroom sued that he would loose
Thy plighted hand ; of all my various fortunes
Informing him, and of my present woes ;
How feasible it were for me to wed
Among my friends, but that for such an exile
As I am, driven from my paternal throne,
'Twould not be easy to obtain a consort
In any foreign land : on this he grew
More arrogant, and bitterly reproached me
Both with my mother's murder, and those Furies
Whose blood-stained visages inspire dismay.
By the misfortunes of my house bowed down
To earth, I grieved indeed, but grieving bore
The weight of these calamities, and reft
Of thee my bride, reluctantly departed.
But since thy fortunes now have undergone
A change so unexpected, and involved
In woe, thou stand'st aghast ; from these abodes
Thee will I take and to thy sire convey.
For wondrous is the force of kindred ties ;
And in misfortunes nought exceeds the friend
Who from the self-same house derives his birth.

HER. My father will take care how to dispose
Of me in marriage, nor is it my province
Such question to decide. But, O convey me
From these loathed mansions with the utmost speed,
Lest when my husband at his first return

Enters the doors, he intercept my flight ;
Or, hearing that I leave his grandson's house,
Peleus pursue me with his rapid steeds.

ORE. Be of good cheer against that aged man,
And from thy furious lord, Achilles' son,
Who treated me with scorn, fear nought ; this hand
Hath with such cautious artifice prepared
For him th' inevitable snares of death,
Of which no previous mention will I make :
But when it is accomplished, this exploit
Shall on the rock of Delphi be proclaimed.
I who my mother slew, if th' armed friends
Whom I have stationed in the Pythian realm
Observe their oaths, will teach him that he ought
To have abstained from wedding any dame
Betrothed to me. He in an evil hour
Shall claim atonement for his father's death
Of Phœbus mighty king ; nor shall repentance
For these audacious blasphemies avail
To save the miscreant on whose impious head
Apollo wreaks just vengeance ; by his wrath
O'ertaken, and entangled in my snares,
He wretchedly shall perish. For the gods
Subvert the prosperous fortunes of their foes
Nor suffer pride to rear her towering crest.
[*Exeunt* ORESTES and HERMIONE.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

Phœbus, thou god who with a mound
Of stately towers didst Ilion's rock surround ;
And thou, O Neptune, ruler of the main,
Borne swiftly by thy azure steeds
In a light car, who cleav'st the watery plain ;
After exerting with unwearied toil
Such skill as human works exceeds,
'Gainst wretched Troy when Mars his javelin bore,
Why, faithless to that chosen soil,
Left ye your city drenched in gore ?

I. 2.

The steeds ye yoked on Simois' banks
Whirled many a chariot through the broken ranks ;
No hero gathered in that stubborn fray
One laurel to adorn his head :
Phrygia's illustrious rulers swept away,

Took their last voyage to a distant shore,
 And mingled with the vulgar dead,
 While the polluted altars ceased to gleam
 Upwafting to the skies no more
 Their frankincense in odorous steam.

II. 1.

Slain by his wife Atrides fell ;
 His furious son sent to the shades of Hell
 The murderess, and returned th' unnatural deed,
 That fatal stroke the god approved,
 His oracles ordained that she should bleed,
 When young Orestes at the inmost shrine
 Was by a heavenly impulse moved,
 His hands in gore maternal to imbrue.
 O Phœbus, O thou power divine,
 How shall I think th' assertion true ?

II. 2.

In Greece doth many a dame complain
 Chaunting rude dirges for her children slain ;
 Others their native land reluctant leave,
 And to a foreign lord are brought.
 Nor yet hast thou alone just cause to grieve,
 Nor to thy friends hath Heaven's peculiar hate
 These signal miseries wrought :
 Victorious Greece still feels as deep a wound,
 From whence the thunderbolt of fate
 Through Phrygia scattered deaths around.

PELEUS, CHORUS.

PEL. Answer my questions, O ye Phthian dames,
 For doubtful is the rumour I have heard,
 That Menelaus' daughter, when she left
 This house departed from the realm. I come
 Anxious to learn if this account be true.
 For 'tis their duty who remain at home
 To guard the fortunes of their absent friends.

CHOR. What thou hast heard, O Peleus, is the truth,
 And ill would it become me to conceal
 The woes in which I deeply am involved :
 Our royal mistress from these walls is fled.

PEL. What feared she ? say.

CHOR. The anger of her lord,
 Lest he from these abodes should cast her forth.

PEL. Because she plotted to have slain the boy ?

CHOR. E'en so it was. Yon captive too she dreaded,

PEL. But from these mansions did she go, attended,
 Or by her father or by whom ?

CHOR. The son
Of Agamemnon from this land conveyed her.
 PEL. What are his views ? to take her for his bride ?
 CHOR. Thy grandson too he meditates to slay.
 PEL. Stationed in secret ambush, or resolved
To meet the dauntless warrior face to face ?
 CHOR. Beneath Apollo's unpolled fane
With Delphi's citizens.
 PEL. Atrocious crime !
 Ah me ! will no one with his utmost speed
Go to the altar of the Pythian god,
And to our friends disclose what passes here,
Ere by his foes Achilles' son is slain ?

MESSENGER, PELEUS, CHORUS.

MES. What evil tidings do I bring to you,
O aged man, and all my master's friends !
 PEL. By a sad presage which affects my soul
I of th' impending evil am forewarned.
 MES. Know then, O Peleus, that your wretched grandson
Is now no more, with such unnumbered wounds
He by the Delphic citizens transpierced,
And by that stranger from Mycene died.
 CHOR. Alas ! alas ! but what resource is left
For thee, thou hoary veteran ? do not fall ;
Raise thyself up.
 PEL. To very nothing now
Am I reduced, I utterly am ruined :
The power of speech deserts me, and these limbs
Forget their office.
 MES. Hear me, and from earth
Arise, if, with th' assistance of your friends,
You for this murder wish to be revenged.
 PEL. How hast thou compassed wretched me, who stand
On the last verge of spiritless old age,
O cruel fate ! say how the only son
Of my deceased, my only son, was slain.
These tidings though unwelcome would I hear.
 MES. After we reached Apollo's sacred realm,
While thrice the chariot of the sun performed
Its bright career, we satiated our eyes
With viewing all around. The circumstance
Which raised suspicion first, was this : the people
Who dwell within the temple of the god
Held frequent meetings, and in crowds assembled.
Meanwhile the son of Agamemnon went
Through the whole city, and in every ear
Whispered malignant words like these : " Behold

Him who is visiting the hallowed shrine
Of Phœbus piled with gold, the treasures given
By all mankind ; the miscreant comes again
On the same purpose which first drew him hither,
To overthrow the temple of the god."
Through the whole city hence an evil rumour
Went forth, and all the magistrates, to whom
The holy treasures were consigned, assembled,
In secret councils held, and placed a guard
Behind the massive columns in the fane.
We, unapprized of this, meantime had caught
Some sheep, that fed amid Parnassus' grove,
And with our Delphic friends and Pythian seers
Approached the altar : some one said : " Young man,
What vows on thy behalf shall we address
To Phœbus ? for what purpose art thou come ?"
He answered : " To the god I wish to make
A due atonement for my past offence,
Because I erst from him with impious tongue
Claimed satisfaction for my father's blood."
Hence did Orestes' calumnies appear
To have great weight, suggesting that my lord
Spoke an untruth, and that he hither came
With vile designs. Beneath the holy roof,
That to Apollo he might offer up
His prayers in that oracular abode,
He now advanced, and as they blazed, observed
The victims : here a troop with falchions armed
Screened by the branching laurels stood ; the son
Of Clytemnestra was the sole contriver
Of all these stratagems. Our lord stood forth,
And, in the sight of this insidious band,
Adored the god : while they with their keen swords,
Ere he discerned them, pierced Achilles' son
Unsheathed in mail. He instantly retreated ;
For he as yet had by no deadly wound
Been smitten ; but snatched up in his retreat
Those glittering arms which near the portals hung,
And stood a champion terrible to view,
Close to the blazing altar : with loud voice
He questioned the inhabitants of Delphi :
" Me who a pious votary hither come,
Why, or for what offences, would ye slay !"
Although the number of his foes was great,
None of them answered, but all hands hurled stones :
On every side assaulted by a storm
Thick as the falling snows, he ward off,
Extending the broad margin of his shield,
Each missile weapon : but of no avail

Was this resistance : for the spear, the shaft,
 The dart, were thrown at once, and at his feet
 Mixed instruments of sacrifice lay scattered.
 Th' agility with which your grandson shunned
 The blows they aimed, was wondrous to behold :
 They in a circle gathering round, closed in,
 Nor gave him space to breathe, till from the altar
 Descending with a leap like that which bore
 The hapless Grecian chief to Phrygia's coast,
 He rushed among them : like a flock of doves
 Who see the hawk appear, they turned and fled :
 In heaps on heaps promiscuous, many fell,
 Some in the narrow passage wounded lay,
 While others o'er them trampled, and their groans
 Unholy echoed through the hallowed dome.
 But, tranquil as the waters in a calm,
 In golden arms my lord resplendent stood,
 Till from the inmost sanctuary burst forth
 A deep-toned voice of horror, which impelled
 The recreant warriors to renew the fight :
 Achilles' son then smitten through the flank
 With a keen sword, by one of Delphi fell,
 Who slew him, yet ignobly, with the aid
 Of multitudes. But after he to earth
 Was fallen, what sword transpierced him not, what hand
 Threw not a stone to smite him ? his whole frame,
 So graceful erst, was with unnumbered wounds
 Disfigured : till at length his mangled corse,
 Which stained the altar's basis, from the fane
 Drenched with the blood of victims they cast forth.
 But gathering up with speed, his loved remains
 To you we bear, O venerable man,
 That o'er them you may shed the plenteous tear,
 And grace them with sepulchral rites. Thus Phoebus,
 Who prophesies to others, mighty king,
 And deals out justice to th' admiring world,
 Hath on Achilles' son revenged himself,
 And, like some worthless human foe, revived
 An ancient grudge : how then can he be wise ?

[*Exit* MESSENGER.]

CHOR. But lo ! our royal master, from the land
 Of Delphi borne, approaches these abodes !
 Wretched was he, by such untimely doom
 O'ertaken : nor art thou, O aged man,
 Less wretched than the slaughtered youth : for thou
 Into thy doors receiv'st Achilles' son,
 But not as thou couldst wish ; thou too art fallen
 Into affliction's snare.

PEL.

What piteous object,

Ah me ! do I behold, and with these hands
 Receive into my house ! we are undone,
 We are undone, O thou Thessalian city ;
 I have no children, no descendants left,
 To occupy these mansions. On what friend
 Shall I a wretched sufferer turn my eyes,
 And hope to find relief ? O thou dear face,
 Ye cheeks, ye hands ! thee would to Heaven that fate
 In those embattled fields of Troy had slain
 Beside the waves of Simois !

CHOR. He in death
 Hence would have found renown ; thou too, old man,
 Wouldst have been happier.

PEL. Thou, O wedlock, wedlock,
 These mansions and my city hast o'erthrown.
 My grandson, through the inauspicious nuptials
 By thee contracted, would to heaven my gates
 Had ne'er received that execrable fiend
 Hermione, thy bane ! O had she first
 With thunderbolts been smitten ! nor hadst thou,
 Presumptuous mortal, charged the Delphic god
 With having aimed the shaft which slew thy sire !

CHOR. I will awake the sad funereal dirge,
 And wailing pay to my departed lord
 Such customary tribute as attends
 The shades of mighty chiefs,

PEL. Ah me ! at once
 With misery and old age bowed down to earth,
 I shed th' incessant tear.

CHOR. Thus hath the god
 Ordained, the god's vindictive arm hath wrought
 All these calamities.

PEL. O most beloved,
 This house, ah me ! a desert hast thou left,
 And me a miserable old man made childless.

CHOR. Before thy children, O thou aged man,
 Thou shouldst have died.

PEL. Shall I not rend my hair,
 And beat with desperate hands this hoary head ?
 O city ! Phœbus hath of both my sons
 Deprived me.

CHOR. O thou miserable old man,
 What evils hast thou witnessed and endured !
 How wilt thou pass the remnant of thy life ?

PEL. Childless, forlorn, no period to my woes
 Can I discover, but till death must drink
 The bitter potion.

CHOR. Sure the gods in vain
 Showered blessings on thy nuptials,

PEL. Fled and withered
Is all our ancient pomp.

CHOR. Alone thou mov'st
Around thy lonely house.

PEL. I have no city.
Thee, O my sceptre, to the ground I cast,
And from yon dreary caverns of the main,
Daughter of Nereus, me wilt thou behold
Utterly ruined, grovelling in the dust.

CHOR. Ha ! who was it that moved ? what form divine
Do I perceive ? look there ! ye nymphs, attend,
With rapid passage through the fleecy clouds
Borne onward, some divinity arrives
At Phthia's pastures, famed for generous steeds.

THETIS, PELEUS, CHORUS.

THE. O Peleus, mindful of the ties which bound
Our plighted love, I hither from the house
Of Nereus come, and with these wholesome counsels
Begin ; despair not, though thy present woes
Are grievous : for e'en I who should have borne
A race of children such as ne'er might cause
My tears to stream, have lost the son who crowned
Our hopes, Achilles, swift of foot, the first
Of Grecian heroes. But to thee, the motives
Which brought me hither, will I now relate ;
O listen to my voice. Back to that altar
Devoted to the Pythian god, convey
This body of Achilles' slaughtered son,
And bury it ; so shall his tomb declare
The murderous violence Orestes' band
Committed : but yon captive dame, I mean
Andromache, on Helenus bestowed
In marriage, in Molossia's land must dwell,
And her young son, the only royal branch
Which of the stem of Æacus remains ;
From him in long succession shall a race
Of happy kings Molossia's sceptre wield :
Nor will our progeny, O aged man,
Be utterly extinct, when blended thus
With Ilion, still protected by the gods,
Though by Minerva's stratagems it fell.
But, as for thee, that thou mayst know the blessing
Of having wedded me, who am by birth
A goddess and the daughter of a god,
From all the ills which wait on human life
Releasing, thee immortal will I make
And incorruptible ; with me a goddess
In Nereus' watery mansions thou a god

Hereafter shalt reside, and from the waves
Emerging with dry feet, behold our son
Achilles, to his parents justly dear,
Inhabiting that isle whose chalky coasts
Are laved by the surrounding Euxine deep.
But go to Delphi's city by the gods
Erected, thither bear this weltering corse,
And when thou hast interred it, to this land
Return, and in that cave which through the rock
Of Sepia time hath worn, thy station keep
Till from the waves I with my sister choir
The fifty Nereids come, to bear thee hence.
Thou must endure the woes imposed by fate,
For thus hath Jove ordained. But cease to grieve
For the deceased: for by the righteous gods
The same impartial sentence is awarded
To the whole human race, and death's a debt
Which all must pay.

PEL. Hail, venerable dame,
Daughter of Nereus, my illustrious wife:
For what thou dost is worthy of thyself,
And of thy progeny. I cease to grieve
At thy command, O goddess, and will go,
Soon as my grandson's corse I have interred,
To Pelion's cave, where first thy beauteous form
I in these arms received. The man whose choice
Is by discretion guided, should select
A consort nobly born, and give his daughters
To those of virtuous families, nor wish
To wed a damsel sprung from worthless sires,
Though to his house a plenteous dower she bring:
So shall he ne'er incur the wrath of Heaven.

CHOR. A thousand shapes our varying fates assume,
The gods perform what we could least expect,
And oft the things for which we fondly hoped
Come not to pass: but Heaven still finds a clue
To guide our steps through life's perplexing maze.
And thus does this important business end.

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